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In November of 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education voted to discontinue the use of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards as the guiding and foundational knowledge base for the training of future educational leaders in North Carolina. In December of 2006, a new set of benchmark standards was established in the form of The North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

The purpose of this study was to discover the effectiveness in using the ISLLC Standards for equipping education leadership graduates with the skills needed to be successful in their roles and responsibilities as school leaders.

The research study was conducted in two phases: interviews and a survey. In total, 127 individuals participated in one of the two phases of research. Participants were graduates from one of three University of North Carolina at Greensboro Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations (ELC) programs between the years of 1998-2008. The second phase of research was conducted using a web-based survey software.

The study yielded a great deal of usable information regarding the effectiveness of an ISLLC-based education in preparing educational leaders for the roles and responsibilities of the workplace. The study also yielded substantial feedback about the effectiveness of the MSA, Ed.S, and Ed.D programs, as a whole, within the ELC Department at UNC-Greensboro.

EXAMINING ONE UNIVERSITY-BASED EDUCATION LEADERSHIP  
PREPARATION PROGRAM, REGARDING THE USE OF ONE  
SET OF BENCHMARK STANDARDS, FOR THE  
PURPOSE OF INFORMING PRACTICE

by

Brian J. Toth

A Dissertation Submitted to  
The Faculty of The Graduate School at  
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Approved by

---

Committee Chair

**To my teachers . . .**

To Dr. Russ Gobble and Mr. Daryl Barnes who taught me the lessons of the workplace.

To Dr. Carl Lashley who taught me the lessons of learning.

To Dr. Don Patterson who taught me the lessons of the mind.

To my wife Leslie and my parents Kelly and Audrey who continue to teach me the  
lessons of love.

And most of all to Rabboni, who cannot be described.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of  
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Date of Final Oral Examination



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# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **A Brief Overview**

School leaders have a daunting job. They are accountable to a wide variety of stakeholders, each with unique expectations. Students want school personnel to treat them fairly while at the same time respecting their individuality as they are “compelled” to attend school from the ages of seven to sixteen (NCGS, 2007). Parents want their children to be cared for, kept safe, and provided with the best educational opportunities available, while at the same time ensuring their parental rights are not infringed upon. Teachers want administrative support within the classroom, while at the same time being allowed the freedom to create a classroom environment that reflects his or her teaching style. The federal and state governments want increased accountability and productivity from schools, while many times issuing unfunded mandates. Boards of Education want schools to maintain harmony with their communities, while at the same time rigorously striving for academic excellence and success. The school leader is responsible for maintaining objectivity and integrity while attempting to meet the needs and expectations of all these parties. As times change, school leaders must adapt to these changes by learning and implementing the new skills necessary to lead the schools under their charge.

School leaders though are not the only ones with daunting jobs. According to

the Consortium for Educational Policy at the University of Missouri, the number of aspiring principals produced by university-based programs is twice to three times the number of job vacancies, but the shortage of qualified candidates to fill school vacancies is 45-55% (Andrews & Grogan, 2002). Additionally, university-based preparation programs have the difficult task of designing and implementing curricula that equips students with the appropriate skills to be effective in their future school leadership roles. Over the years, education leadership preparation programs have struggled to keep current in training and equipping students with the skills needed for the ever-changing requirements of the principalship. University-based preparation programs have needed a benchmark set of standards or domains to focus on, as a compass, providing them direction as they design and implement rigorous training for future school leaders.

In 1994, the Council of Chief State School Officers, under the authority of the National Policy Board for Educational Administration, began drafting a set of standards for administrator certification and preparation programs that could be used as “a national model of leadership standards and serve as a common language of leadership expectations across differences in state policies” (CCSSO, 1996). With the creation and adoption of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards in 1996, university-based education leadership preparation programs now had the set of benchmark standards they had needed and could use, as they crafted their education leadership curricula and courses of study.

In November of 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education voted to discontinue the use of the ISLLC Standards as the guiding and foundational knowledge

base for the training of future educational leaders in North Carolina. A new set of benchmark standards was established in the form of The North Carolina Standards for School Executives. This most recent turn of events sets the stage for this study.

### **A Preceding Study**

This study was loosely connected as a follow-up study to a dissertation project conducted by Dr. Crystal Vail in 2004. Dr. Vail's study, Career Paths of North Carolina Principal Fellows, studied the career paths of North Carolina Principal Fellows Program graduates across the state from classes One through Four. The focus of Vail's study was to determine whether the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program was successful "in its purpose of increasing the number of qualified candidates for administrative positions" (Vail, 2004). Vail's study found the Principal Fellows Program was in fact accomplishing its goal in that, "the majority of Principal Fellows Program participants were remaining in administrative positions at the school level upon completing the repayment period (of their service loan)" (Vail, 2004).

This study converges with Vail's in the following areas:

- 1-- Both studies used graduates of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Masters of School Administration (MSA) program as research participants
- 2-- Both studies sought to understand the effectiveness of a given topic on the careers of these graduates. Vail's study sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program, while this study sought to understand the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards as the benchmark set of standards for training school administrators.

This study diverges with Vail's in the following areas:

- 1-- Where Vail studied Principal Fellow Program graduates from MSA programs at 11 different universities across the state, this study focused solely on graduates of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro's MSA, Ed.S, and Ed.D

programs.

- 2-- Vail's study looked for trends or "tendencies" of Principal Fellow graduates who maintained roles as building-level school leaders and those who chose other careers. This study did not focus on graduate career paths. Rather, it examined the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards as the benchmarks for preparing school leaders for their current roles.

### **Topic Selection**

In their book, Theses & Dissertations: A guide to planning research, and writing (2000), Thomas and Brubaker discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a dissertation researcher creating his or her own topic versus accepting an assigned or suggested topic.

An excerpt reads,

One long-honored tradition in academia is that of professors assigning thesis and dissertation topics to their advisees instead of having students create topics of their own. Or, if faculty supervisors don't actually assign topics, they may at least suggest what their advisees might study. There are both advantages and disadvantages to assigned research problems. Perhaps the most obvious advantage of adopting a professor's proposal is that you ensure that your mentor enthusiastically endorses your project. Assigned topics are often part of a faculty member's own research program, with each student's topic representing one piece of a complex puzzle the professor is trying to solve. . . Furthermore, accepting a topic that is part of someone else's research not only relieves you of hunting for a research problem, but it may also lighten your burden of devising a design, creating data-gathering instruments, and interpreting the results. Those tasks may already have been performed by the professor or his staff. However, depending so heavily on others for a research problem robs you of the opportunity to work out such matters for yourself (p.49).

Taking Thomas and Brubaker's concerns into account, I did choose to accept this topic as part of a suggested theme offered by a mentor professor. But, the circumstances were quite different from those detailed by Thomas and Brubaker (2000). The authors suggest that many times assigned dissertation topics are part of a professor's research agenda.

Under this model, the dissertation researcher is providing one piece of the puzzle. In the case of this particular study, the topic was not as much a part of a professor's research agenda as it was a concern of the academic department. As the Education Leadership & Cultural Foundations (ELC) Department within the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, the department had a professional interest in this topic as it seeks to provide a current, relevant, and effective course of study for future education leaders.

There is another significant difference between the circumstances of this study and the passage cited above. Thomas and Brubaker issue several cautions to dissertation writers in accepting an assigned or suggested research topic. One such caution is that accepting a topic can, "lighten your burden of devising a design, creating data-gathering instruments, and interpreting the results" (p. 49). In this study, the research design had not yet taken place. So, while the topic was suggested with the purpose of hopefully yielding useable information for the UNCG ELC Department, the design, data-gathering, and interpretive work were still left to be done, allowing me the opportunity to gain the full experience associated with generating a study from the ground level.

### **My Interest In This Topic**

Though this topic was suggested to me by a mentor professor, I had a deep personal interest in this topic. I studied for the Masters of School Administration degree between the years of 2001 and 2003. During this time period, the ISLLC Standards were the benchmark standards by which university-based school leadership preparation programs in North Carolina aligned their curricula. Therefore, I would fall into the group

of those whose experience as a practicing school administrator was under an ISLLC-based education. In that way, this study had personal significance for me.

My professional education leadership experience began as a high school assistant principal from 2003-2006. I have been an elementary principal from 2006 to the present. As I reflect on my years of experience thus far as a school administrator, I believe my first year of assistant principalship and first year of the principalship were the hardest. This was not because of the ISLLC Standards I was trained under but because of the inherent demands of the job. It is my opinion the first year in any new position is taxing. It is a time of acclimating and adapting one's knowledge and skills to the specific needs of that role. The longer a person is in a specific role, the more resources and experience a person develops. I believe this time of acclimation is inherent in most new work roles. I do not equate my early difficulties as an administrator with any ineffectiveness in my university preparation program. On the contrary, I believe my MSA program, based on the ISLLC Standards, equipped me with the philosophical and practical tools to be successful in this ever-changing field of education leadership. I was very interested in this study to learn whether other administrators who received an ISSLC-based education perceived their experience as I do.

Besides having a personal interest in this study as one of the practicing administrators trained under the ISLLC Standards, I also had another interest. Since completing an MSA degree in 2003, I continued on in my education to study for Education Specialist (Ed.S) and Doctorate of Education (Ed.D) degrees. As an ongoing graduate student between the years of 2001 to the present, I have been an eyewitness to

the changing standards in school leadership with the implementation of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives in 2008. Witnessing the implementation of the new standards created a curiosity as to the cause for this change, the history and background of the new standards, and more importantly, an interest in how administrators schooled under the ISLLC Standards perceived the efficiency and effectiveness of those standards in preparing them for their roles and responsibilities.

### **Purpose Statement**

This purpose statement is written according to the model provided by Cresswell (1998) in that, “the purpose statement (outlines) the major objective or intent for the study, . . . provid(ing) an essential road map for the reader” (Cresswell,1998).

The purpose of this study was to discover the effectiveness in using one set of standards for equipping graduates of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro Masters of School Administration, Specialist of Education, and Doctorate of Education programs, between the years of 1998-2008, with the skills needed to be successful in their roles and responsibilities as school leaders. At this stage in the research, the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards was defined as the degree to which graduates perceive that the MSA, Ed.S, or Ed.D program based on the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their duties and responsibilities within the workplace.

### **Need and Rationale For This Study**

The need for this study was threefold and can be expressed in a visual representation. In this visual model, each need for the study will be represented by one of three concentric rings, each one larger and encompassing the last. Just as each ring will

grow in size, the potential for contribution of this study increases in scope and influence from personal to more global in nature with each need represented. With each larger ring, the potential for impact becomes greater.

The first need for this study was personal in nature. I was curious about how my peers felt training under the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their positions of education leadership. In this way, I was learning how this topic affected those whose experience paralleled my own. Please see Figure 1.1, below.

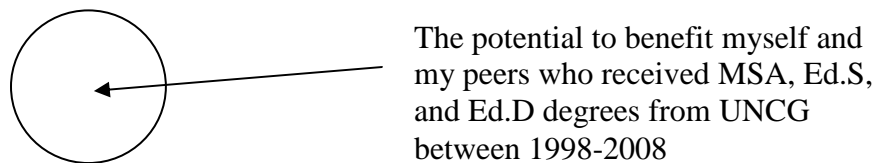


Figure 1.1 The Need For This Study.

The second way this study can contribute to literature can be represented by a second concentric ring, larger in scope than the first. The information collected, analyzed, and interpreted from this study had the potential to provide useful information to a larger group than just the first circle. This information may also be relevant and helpful to the ELC Department at UNCG. By reaching the ELC department at UNCG, any constructive conclusions and recommendations may be used by the department to revise and update the curriculum and course of study to impact their students for years to come. Please see Figure 1.2, below.



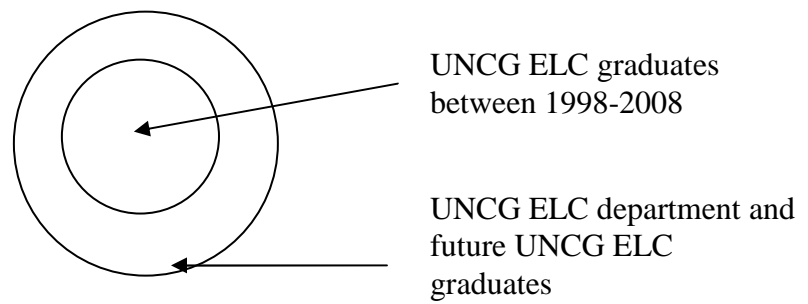


Figure 1.2 The Second Need For This Study.

The third way this study had the potential to contribute to literature can be illustrated by a third concentric ring, still larger, encompassing the first two, and larger in scope and influence. The content of this study addressed an evident void in the literature base. As we will explore and discuss in Chapter 2, there is a tremendous amount of research and literature addressing university-based preparation programs, speaking to a wide variety of facets within the field of education leadership. But, there is not an extensive and established base of literature related to our specific study. This study stood to fill a void in literature within this one specific niche. Figure 1.3, below, represents this specific need in relation to the previous two.

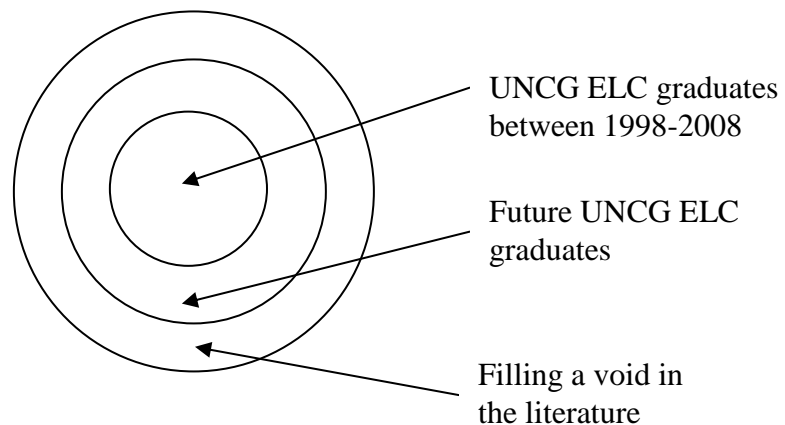


Figure 1.3 The Third Need For This Study.

Figures 1.1-1.3 detailed the intended beneficiaries of the study. We must also discuss the way this study was situated in literature. Figure 1.4 below is a concept map detailing the extensive base of literature surrounding university-based preparation programs and education reform.

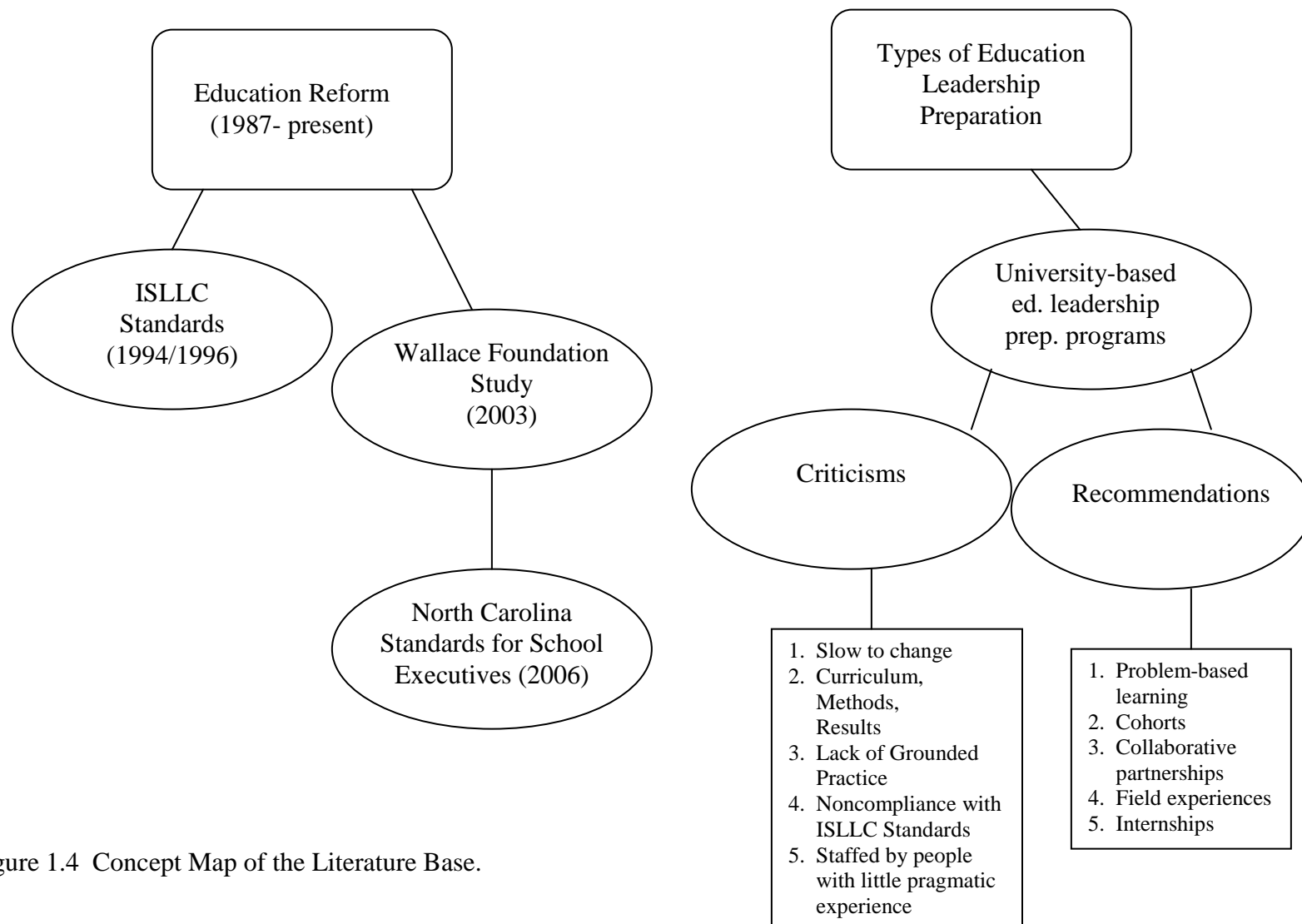


Figure 1.4 Concept Map of the Literature Base.

Figure 1.5 below, shows how this study interacts and interfaces with previous research to fill this niche. This study sought to examine how administrators schooled under the ISLLC Standards felt the Standards prepared them for their positions and to what extent. This information has the potential to be used by education leadership professors as they revise curricula to better prepare students to be successful under a new standards paradigm-- The North Carolina Standards for School Executives. This study sought to create a bridge in information between the successes and failures of instruction based on the ISLLC Standards and instruction centered under the new Standards for School Executives. The steps defined above are outlined in blue in Figure 1.5.

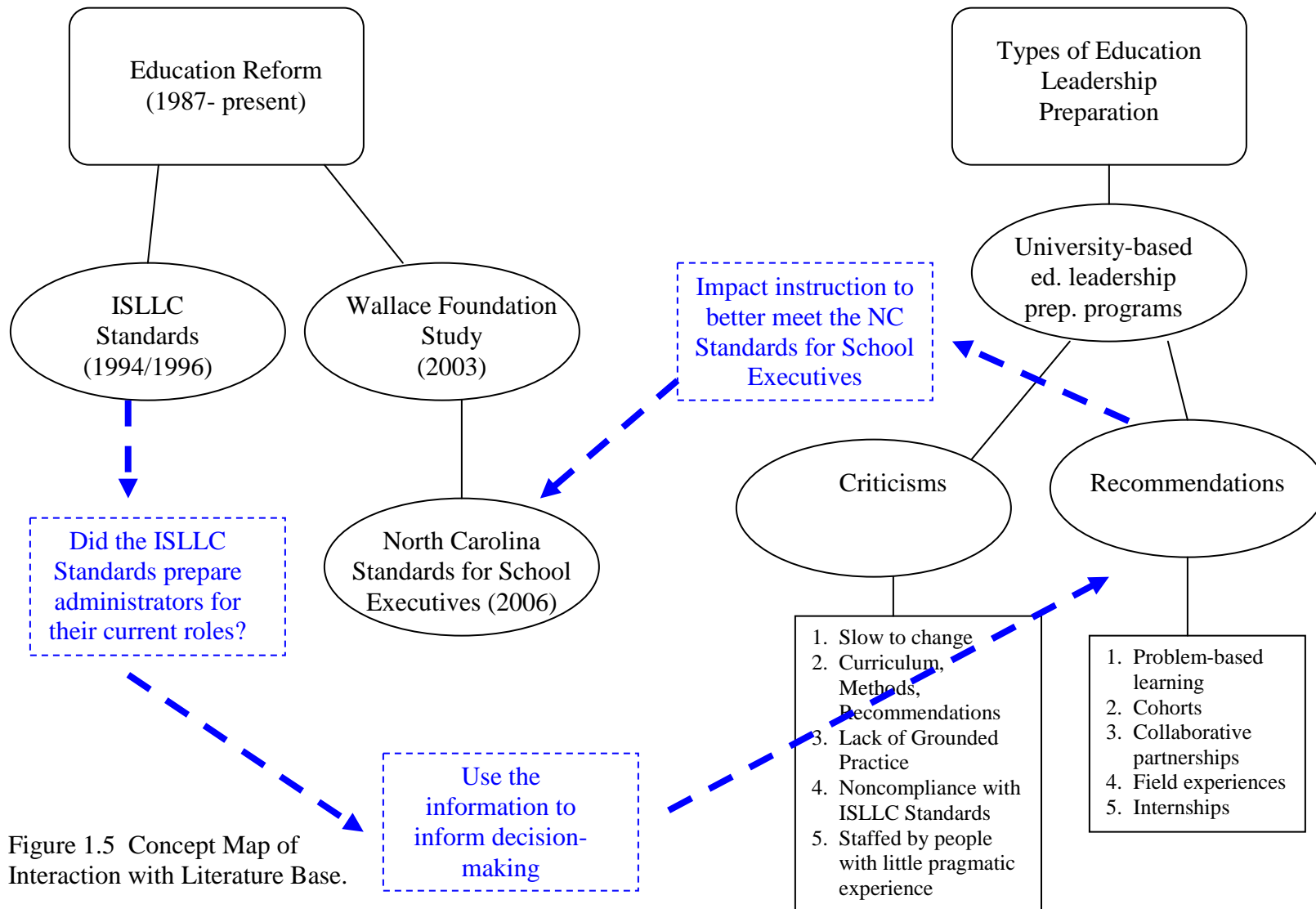


Figure 1.5 Concept Map of Interaction with Literature Base.

The ISLLC Standards were used by education leadership preparation programs in North Carolina from 1996 to 2008. During that time, hundreds of school leaders graduated from a UNCG ELC program, and are now using their education as school leaders throughout North Carolina and other states. With a new set of standards in place in North Carolina, the question is raised: Do students trained under the ISLLC Standards feel those standards adequately prepared them for their roles? If we can learn the answer to this question, we may be able to use this information to determine an appropriate balance between a university program's use of benchmark standards and other elements of the curriculum. This is important now more than ever. This information may be useful to help university programs align to the new standards. With the field of education leadership changing constantly, learning how graduates feel about instruction under the last set of standards may help university-based preparation programs determine how to best use the new standards.

We must take lessons from history to inform future practice. In our case, by studying the perception of how education leaders felt the ISLLC Standards prepared them, we could better inform practice about how to use the North Carolina Standards for School Executives to best prepare future education leaders.

### **Methodology and Overview of Remainder of Dissertation**

The format of the methodology of this study was a compilation of two sources. I used Thomas and Brubaker (2000) to ensure the inclusion of the critical components and proper sequencing. Cresswell's model (1998) was used to most appropriately adapt the methodological design to the specific veins of qualitative research used in this project.

## Research Questions

This study sought to address the following primary research question:

How do UNCG graduates of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations between the years 1998-2008 feel their preparation program centered around the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their roles as school leaders?

Secondary questions will include:

1. Are there crucial pieces that a program specifically centered around the ISLLC Standards left out?
2. As the UNCG ELC Department incorporates a new set of outcome standards into their preparation programs-- the NC Standards for School Executives, are there lessons to learn from the use of the ISLLC Standards over the past ten years?

In order to best understand the answers to these questions, subject participants were interviewed and surveyed on several questions about the ISLLC Standards as well as questions about the NC Standards for School Executives. To gain an understanding about how the participants felt the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their positions of leadership, it was necessary to establish a frame of reference. Answering questions about the NC Standards for School Executives established that frame of reference, and provided useable data in order to better impact instruction to meet the new standards.

## Literature Review

As has already briefly been mentioned, the landscape of research pertaining to education leadership preparation is broad and deep. The Literature Review for this study surveyed that landscape, orienting us to where this study fell within the established base of research, and highlighted the void in literature surrounding our study. Chapter Two will trace the following outline:

- I. Introduction
- II. Era of Education Reform

- III. ISLLC Standards
  - Studies of ISLLC Standards
- IV. NC Standards for School Executives
  - Study behind standards
- V. University-based Preparation Programs
  - A. Criticisms
  - B. Suggestions for Improvement

### Methodology

This study used mixed methods for data collection. The first phase of research used interviews. The purpose of the first phase was to gather data in order to create the most effective survey instrument. The second phase of research used surveys. Graduates of one of UNCG's three ELC programs were given a survey. The survey asked preliminary questions, questions about each participant's perceptions of preparation under the ISLLC Standards, questions about each participant's perceptions about the NC Standards for School Executives, and questions enlisting suggestions for the ELC Department.

### Presentation and Analysis of Findings

Following the collection of data using interviews and the survey instrument, the data will be presented and analyzed for useful information.

### Summary, Conclusion, Recommendations, and Confessional Tale

The last phase of the study, Chapter Five, will consist of multiple steps. This phase will start with a brief summary of the study. In the second step, we will draw conclusions and make recommendations from the analysis of data in Chapter Four. The last step of this chapter will be a confessional tale. The confessional tale will provide an



opportunity to discuss the study from a global perspective. In the confessional tale I will discuss some lessons I learned from the dissertation process.

## **Definitions**

It may be helpful to define several terms before proceeding further. As different terms carry different interpretations and applications, it is necessary to establish the intended context of these terms in order to minimize misunderstanding and confusion.

### **Courses of Study:**

This term will be used in two different contexts throughout the paper. It will be used in a general sense, to discuss the curriculum of a university-based educational leadership program. It will also be used in reference to the prescribed set of courses within the MSA, Ed.S, or Ed.D programs at UNCG.

### **Curricula or (curriculum):**

This term will also be used in two different contexts throughout the paper. When used in association with the ISLLC Standards or NC Standards for School Executives, it is intended in a theoretical and global context. The ISLLC and School Executive standards, as predefined outcome-standards require graduates to be competent in certain domain or objective areas. In this way, I will speak of each set of standards as a curriculum. The second context of this word will be used in association with the specific courses and courses of study provided by university-based preparation programs. The content within these courses will also be referred to as a curriculum.

### **Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards:**

This term will be used frequently throughout this study. This term will be used to describe the specific set of content standards developed and approved by the Council of Chief State School Officers in 1996

### **NC Standards for School Executives:**

This term will be used to refer to the specific set of content standards approved and implemented by the North Carolina State Board of Education in November of 2006.

### **University-Based Preparation Programs:**

This term will be used to refer to graduate level programs sponsored by public universities and colleges for the purpose of training future educational leaders.

We will now turn to Chapter 2 in which we will review the literature on leadership preparation.

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

#### **Purpose of the Literature Review**

In their book, Theses and Dissertations: A guide to planning, research, and writing, Thomas and Brubaker (2000) outline five primary purposes for a literature review:

. . . demonstrate how skillfully you (a) situated your chosen topic within a relevant body of knowledge, (b) found in the literature a significant quantity of other studies that bear on your topic, (c) evaluated the quality of those studies (their strengths and limitations), (d) identified the linkages between your project and previous studies, and (e) showed what contribution your project can make to the field in which your work is located.

This Review of the Literature will seek to address each of these purposes, focusing predominately on (a), (b), (d) and (e).

#### **Statement of the Problem**

##### **A. Contextual Problem**

Imagine for just a moment that you are 10 years old and with your family at the county fair. It has a carnival type of atmosphere. When you get there, one of the first things that catch your eye is a ferris wheel rising above the skyline of games, roller coasters, and tents. The lights on the frame of the structure are beginning to come alive as the sun wanes below the horizon. You walk with your family up and down the aisles of games and activities. Over to the left, a muscular teenager is trying to impress his

girlfriend by pounding an oversized hammer against a target to shoot the cylinder up a pole and ring the bell. Ahead and to the right, kids are screaming on one of two small rickety roller coasters. Just then you notice a man walking among the crowd, selling fluffy blue and pink cotton candy.

Your parents call your name to hurry and catch up as they walk deeper into the maze of games, sights and sounds. You smell something in the air. It is distant and faint, but as you keep walking, the smell is unmistakable, funnel cakes! You ask your parents if you can have one, and to your surprise, they say “yes”, but you have to use part of the money you have been saving. After you finish your funnel cake buried in that white confectioner’s sugar, you have just enough money left to play one carnival game. You walk with your parents past the clown selling balloons, through the crowds of people, some carrying oversized stuffed animals they have won. Finally you reach your destination. It is the alley with all the games. There is the ring toss game where contestants try to land a ring on one of the milk bottles without having it bounce off and fall between the bottles. There is the water squirt gun game where you race against a competitor to see who can spray the most water at a target. Finally, you see the game you have been saving your money to play. It is the best choice out of all the games along the alley. It is the turkey shoot.

You walk up to the booth and hand your money to the man behind the counter. In exchange, he hands you a small BB rifle. You get three shots. You pick out a line of moving ducks on the top row of the backdrop. You take aim at the last duck in the line, thinking it will be the easiest target to pick off. It is squarely in your sights. “Ping”, goes

the sound of a BB hitting the metal wall behind the ducks. Your shot falls just behind its target. This time you take aim at a duck in the front of the line. “Even if I miss”, you think to yourself, “I will hit one of the ducks behind it. “Ping”. Again, the shot falls behind the duck, hitting the backdrop. For your last shot, you take aim at a duck in the center of the pack. “Even if I miss this time” you think, “ I am sure to hit something”. Your breathing slows. You get tunnel vision. It is just you and this one duck. The rest of the universe has grown quiet. You squeeze the trigger. “Ping”. You missed again. Close, but again you barely missed right behind the target.

With the visual picture of a carnival turkey shoot squarely in our minds, let us return to our current topic at hand. The turkey shoot alley game we played when we were 10 years old is, in essence, the contextual problem of this study. Preparation programs are trying with all their energy and resources to do the best and most accurate job possible. The problem though is that preparation programs are aiming at a moving target. Every time preparation programs adjust their sights and re-orient their curricula, the target moves. Not only are preparation programs asked to aim ahead of their target at the projected skill-set their students will need upon graduation, but the outcome-based standards we ask preparation programs to target keep moving.

## **B. Problem Statement**

In November of 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education voted to discontinue the use of the ISLLC Standards as the standards used for the preparation of school administrators. In December of 2006, the Board voted in a new set of benchmarks in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. There are lessons to be learned

from the discontinuation of one set of standards and the implementation of another. The cycle is repeating itself. We have a new set of standards and, to some extent, a new skill-set for the preparation of school leaders. At times like these, we are compelled to reflect and learn from our past in order to inform practice and improve our future. Conducting an assessment of graduate as to how they feel an education under the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their administrative roles yielded substantive information that could be used by education leadership programs not only as they usher in a new era under the North Carolina Standards for School Executives, but also for the future when the benchmarks change again.

### **History of Education Leadership Preparation**

The first education leadership positions began not with the principalship, but with the superintendency, in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gregg, 1960). Murphy (1998) speaks of early schools as “simple organizations”, which had little need for formally-trained administrators. Gregg (1969) states,

Under such circumstances, the administrator could learn his profession effectively on the job by trial-and-error process. Little, if any, formal specialized preparation was needed, and none was provided. The minimal formal education which was designed for teachers was deemed sufficient for those who would become administrators. (p.993-994)

In 1875, William L. Payne a school superintendent in Michigan, wrote the first book in the United States dealing with school administration, *Chapters on School Supervision* (Callahan & Button, 1964). Payne is also commonly considered the first person to teach a college level course on school administration, at the University of

Michigan (Callahan & Button, 1964). Cooper and Boyd (1987) note that professors of education leadership as well as specific programs for school administration were “unknown until the early 1900’s.”

In the 1920’s, the Departments of Elementary School Principals and Secondary School Principals were formed within the National Education Association (Andrews & Grogan, 2002). Soon after the formation of these two departments, the principalship began to be viewed as a legitimate formal role within the American school. As a result, universities started formal programs to train new principals (Andrews & Grogan, 2002). To date, there are over 500 university-based training programs in the United States to prepare aspiring educational leaders (Freeman et al, 1997).

### **A Changing Landscape**

In an article, *Preparation For the School Principalship: The United States’ story*, Murphy (1998) categorizes education leadership preparation into four eras:

1. The Ideological Era, 1820-1899  
-Though education leadership found its roots in the early 1800’s, the field grew substantially after the Civil War.
2. The Prescriptive Era, 1900-1946  
-In 1900, no institutions were offering substantive study in the area of school administration. By the end of World War II, 125 institutions had active programs to prepare school administrators. This era is marked by institutions following a very prescriptive established course of study.
3. The Scientific Era, 1947-1985  
-This era focused on empiricism. It was also a time period known for the establishment and expansion of professional organizations which challenged the prescriptive course of study, calling for the reform of preparation programs based on reputable research. Some of the professional organizations established during this era include The National Council of Professors in Educational Administration (NCPEA)(1947), The Cooperative Project in Educational Administration (CPEA),

The Committee for the Advancement of School Administration (CASA)(1955), and The University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA)(1956). Not surprisingly, the number of doctorate degrees doubled during this era, and the preparation program faculty size doubled from an average of five to 10, before going back to five in the mid 1980's.

4. The Dialectic Era, 1986-present

-The era we are currently experiencing is a time of post-scientific modernism. While the transition of each era has been catalyzed by sharp criticism of education leadership preparation, this era has been fueled by, “devastating attacks on the current state of preparation programs, critical analyses of practicing school administrators and references to alternative visions of what programmes should become”.

Since the 1920's, with the formal beginning of the principalship, the required skill-set of the school leader has changed numerous times, and as we will discuss, remains a changing landscape even today. The conceptualization of the school leader's role has changed with each decade. The 1920's was a conservative era, asking educational leaders to focus instruction on linking school and family values through the pedagogy of the school. The 1930's required the principal to move away from family values and focus on the scientific management of schools. The post World War II climate of the 1940's asked the principal to concentrate teaching and learning on patriotic values and building a strong democratic citizenry. The Cold War of the 1950's brought another change, asking the principal to change his skill-set again, focusing instruction on the academics, especially math and the sciences. Social problems in the 1960's and 1970's such as substance abuse, racial tension, and teen pregnancy asked the principal to shift leadership styles to focus on social issues. The explosion of international economic competition in the 1980's, primarily with Japan, led to the “A Nation At Risk” report and ushered in the era of education reform that we are currently experiencing.



## **The Era of Education Reform**

The past 20 years have seen substantial reform efforts in the field of educational leadership preparation programs. In 1987, the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA) sponsored the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration (Jackson, 2001). This Commission sharply criticized educational leadership preparation programs in ten major “deficient” areas. Those ten areas include:

1. A lack of a definition of good educational leadership
2. A lack of leader recruitment programs in schools
3. A lack of collaboration between school districts and universities
4. A lack of minorities and women in the field
5. A lack of systematic professional development for school administrators
6. A lack of quality candidates for preparation programs
7. A lack of preparation programs relevant to the job demands of school administrators
8. A lack of sequence, modern content, and clinical experience in preparation programs
9. A lack of licensure systems to promote excellence
10. A lack of a national sense of cooperation in preparing school leaders (NCEE, 1987)

In examining these 10 “deficiencies”, many are not within the control of education leadership preparation programs (NCEE, 1987). Still, the Commission report, Leaders for America’s Schools- The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Educational Administration, provided nine primary recommendations in attempt to bring quality and consistency to the nation’s education leadership preparation programs. The nine recommendations include:

1. Redefine educational leadership
2. Establish a National Policy Board on Educational Administration
3. Model administration preparation programs after those of other professional schools

4. Terminate at least 300 college and university educational administration programs
  5. Initiate recruitment and placement programs for minorities and women
  6. Require public schools' full partnership in preparing administrators
  7. Create management development opportunities
  8. Reform licensure programs
- (NCEE, 1987)

Among the recommendations of the Commission for reform was the establishment of an organization that would monitor and enforce the recommendations of the Commission. As a result, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) was born (Jackson, 2001).

In addition to monitoring and enforcing the recommendations of the NCEE, the NPBEA also provides a communication network and common voice for the major educational leadership professional associations. Members of the NPBEA include the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP), the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), the University Council for Educational Administration (UCEA), the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration (NCPEA), the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), and the National School Boards Association (NSBA) (Jackson, 2001).

In addition to the creation of the NPBEA, other measures have been taken to reform and standardize education leadership preparation programs as well. In 1996, the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) endorsed the use of the ISLLC Standards (CCSSO, 1996). The ISLLC Standards were the result of 24 state and

professional organizations, established “as a common core of knowledge, dispositions, and performances that will help link leadership more forcefully to productive schools and enhanced educational outcomes” (CCSSO, 1996; Carr & Fulmer, 2004). Appendix A lists the seven ISLLC Standards.

A third measure of reform taken to improve the quality of education leadership preparation programs was the establishment of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Authorized by the US Department of Education, NCATE uses the ISLLC Standards to accredit university-based preparation programs (NCATE, 2007). Interestingly, these standards were accepted by the Educational Leadership Constituency Council (ELCC) which was created by the NPBEA for the purpose of developing standards for preparation programs, based on the ISLLC Standards (Sanders & Simpson, 2006). The standards were then adopted and integrated by NCATE and the ELCC into the ELCC/NCATE Program Standards (NCATE, 2007; Sanders & Simpson, 2006). The goal of the ISLLC Standards was to, “provide a clear, organized set of curriculum content and performance standards that could be used to drive the preparation, professional development, and licensure of principals, nationwide” (Jackson, 2001). It is clear with the adoption and implementation of the ISLLC Standards in 1996 by the CCSSO and later by NCATE and the ELCC, federal and state governments worked to unify and standardize their expectation of university-based preparation programs (Fulmer & Dembowski, 2005).

Appendix B offers a pictorial representation of how each of these organizations have interacted to foster reform in the field of education leadership preparation. This

concept map yields at least three pieces of data. First, it points out the connections and inter-relationships between the organizations mentioned above. Second, it draws attention to the tremendous amount of scholarship and collaboration across the organizations which resulted in a common set of preparation standards, known as the ISLLC Standards. Third, Appendix B shows the magnitude of national organizations governing education leadership preparation that have endorsed a common set of standards. The UCEA is over the NPBEA. The NPBEA governs the ELCC. Members of the NPBEA include the AASA, NASSP, NAESP, ASCD, UCEA, NCPEA, AACTE, and NSBA. The ELCC endorsed the common set of national standards, as did the CCSSO and NCATE. The ISLLC Standards were backed either directly or indirectly by virtually every major organization affiliated with education leadership preparation.

In 1994, ISLLC began to draft a common set of standards that could be used nationally in the development of qualified public school leaders (CCSSO, 1996). ISLLC, a program under the jurisdiction of the CCSSO and funded by Pew Charitable Trusts and the Danforth Foundation, adopted a set of six content standards in 1996 which became the competency guide for the preparation of the school leaders in 41 states (CCSSO, 1996; Sanders & Simpson, 2006). As one of the 41 adoptees of these ISLLC standards, North Carolina incorporated the standards into the North Carolina Standards for the Preparation of School Leaders. In adopting the six ISLLC Standards, North Carolina added a seventh standard- the internship experience required for North Carolina graduation and licensure requirements. The seven North Carolina Standards for the Preparation of School Leaders are listed in Appendix A. The State of North Carolina

used these standards as its outcome-based standards for the preparation of education leaders until November of 2006 (NCDPI, 2006).

In dissecting the original six ISLLC Standards, all six share a common root. They each begin in the same way: “Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students. . .” (CCSSO, 1996). This common root statement requires two things of the educational leader. First, the leader must have the *knowledge* of each competency in order to promote the success of all students. Second, the leader must have the *ability* to promote the success of all students. Possessing the *knowledge* and the *ability*, relative to the context in which they are framed in the Standards, is a very high demand.

There is something else quite interesting within the root phrase of each standard. “Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of *all* students (emphasis mine; CCSSO, 1996)”. Having the sufficient knowledge and ability to meet the needs of the majority is one thing, but having the knowledge and ability to meet the needs of everybody is something else entirely. The North Carolina Standards for the Preparation of School Leaders required school leaders to meet the standards in the interest and for the benefit of *all* students.

To date, 46 states have professional standards for the certification of educational leaders and preparation programs (Sanders & Simpson, 2005). Forty-one states use the ISLLC Standards as their benchmark professional standards.

## **Studies on the Effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards**

As I surveyed the field of literature for studies relating to the ISLLC Standards, I was particularly interested in one vein of research. My goal was to familiarize myself with studies that have been conducted specifically on the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards in preparing school leaders for their roles in the workplace. My reasoning was that this particular vein of research is the closest body of research to the topic of this dissertation study. My goal was to get a better understanding of how my topic situates within this niche and also to examine the methodologies of studies for the purpose of adapting components of different methodologies for use within this study.

As I conducted this research, several trends became clear.

- 1-- The scope of research and writing on the ISLLC Standards is extremely wide and deep. In fact, the amount of research seems, at times, bottomless. The scope of research and writing about the previously mentioned specific vein on the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards is much smaller. In fact, I was unable to find specific studies along this theme.
- 2-- The largest amount of research on the ISLLC Standards has been departmental studies conducted by students in education leadership programs, dissertation studies conducted by doctoral candidates, and papers presented by professors of education leadership at national and regional conferences. While there are a number of pure researchers who have written on this topic, it was interesting to note that the largest volume of the research in this area has been conducted by other groups.
- 3-- The most prevalent research on the ISLLC Standards includes: the history of the ISLLC Standards, strategies used to develop the ISLLC Standards, ways states and education leadership programs can use the ISLLC Standards, case studies involving the ISLLC Standards for developing new education leadership programs, studies correlating the ISLLC Standards to other state and leadership program standards.

The lack of studies relating to the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards leads me to one of two conclusions.

1-- The studies I was looking for do not exist

2-- The studies exist, but are scarce enough that I was unable to uncover them

Regardless of which conclusion is true, we can glean useful information from a survey of this vein in the literature base. A great deal of planning, research, critique and scholarship went into the ISLLC Standards. Yet it appears that little research has been done in our specific vein or niche in evaluating the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards in preparing school leaders for the work place.

Following are the four studies I found closest to the topic of this study.

1. Teacher Perceptions of Principal's Use of ISLLC Standards. (Reeber, 2002)

This study was a doctoral dissertation done by a student at Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan. In his study, Reeber explored the teacher perceptions regarding the use of standards to assess a principal's effectiveness in fulfilling the function and meeting standards established by ISLLC. The study, a non-experimental descriptive research design, found that staff perceive there is a positive correlation in the use of the ISLLC Standards as an accurate set of benchmarks to assess a principal's effectiveness.

2. School Leadership Preparation Programs: Are they preparing tomorrow's leaders? (Barnet, 2004)

The primary focus of this study was to examine the applicability of school leadership training programs. The study interviewed principals, supervisors, and superintendents to determine the frequency of practice and preparedness related to the ISLLC Standards. The study found the ISLLC Standards to be an accurate description of a leader's daily activity, but the preparation provided in training programs to meet those

activities seemed to be lacking. One interesting note within this study was that the author called for less emphasis on management in training programs and more emphasis on instructional leadership. This would appear to conflict with the North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

3. The Standards We Need: A Comparative Analysis of Performance Standards Shows Us What Is Essential for Principals To Know and Be Able To Do To Improve Achievement. (Waters, & Kingston, 2005).

This study compared the six key findings of the Mid-continent Research for Education & Learning (McREL)'s Balanced Leadership Framework with the 184 ISLLC Indicators. The goal of the study was to conduct this comparative analysis with the purpose of providing insight about what future standards for school-level leaders should encompass. The study says of the ISLLC Standards,

What these efforts produced was an extraordinarily wide range of responsibilities without distinction between important and essential responsibilities . . . In addition to being overwhelming in scope, the ISLLC Standards provide no guidance on which standards should take primacy or what is essential for principals to know and be able to do to improve student achievement.

The study found the following flaws in the ISLLC Standards:

1. McREL's Balanced Leadership Framework contains 17 leadership practices not included in the ISLLC Standards
2. The six ISLLC Standards and 184 indicators make no distinction between essential and important leadership responsibilities.
3. Only two of ISLLC's 184 indicators related to change leadership, a crucial part of leadership

The study called for a set of standards that explicitly identify essential leadership standards.



4. Content Validity of the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders: To What Extent Do ISLLC Skill Indicators Describe School Leaders' Instructional Leadership Work? (Lindle, Stalion, & Young (2004).

The purpose of this study was to extend the content validity studies of the ISLLC Standards past those done by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) for the School Leaders Licensure Assessment. The study used observational analyses and content comparisons to compare ISLLC's 96 skill indicators from the six content standards to nine standards and 88 indicators used by Kentucky through the Standards and Indicators for School Improvement (SISI). The study found an extensive amount of overlap between the two sets of standards and indicators. The results of this study supported the validity of the ISLLC Standards in their relevance to other sets of standards used to education leadership preparation.

As we can see with each of these studies, though they were loosely related to our topic, each one pursued a unique and different aspect. None of the studies directly explored the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards. The first study examined teachers' perceptions of whether the ISLLC Standards were an appropriate set of benchmarks to assess principal performance. The second study was similar to the first, assessing whether the ISLLC Standards accurately encompassed a site-based leader's typical day, for the purpose of informing education leadership preparation programs. The third study was a comparative study, examining the ISLLC Standards alongside the McREL Balanced Leadership Framework. The objective of the study was to formulate an encompassing set of standards for the future. The fourth study, similar in ways to the first and second study, similar in other ways to the third, examined the validity of the

ISLLC Standards as a competent set of standards to prepare school leaders, also adding a comparative component with Kentucky's SISI. None of these studies spoke directly to our topic at hand or provided an established methodology that could be adapted for the purposes of our study.

### **The North Carolina Standards for School Executives**

On November 2, 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education voted to discontinue the use of the ISLLC Standards. On December 7, 2006 the State Board of Education approved a new set of standards by which public school administrators would be trained and evaluated (State Board of Education, 2006; North Carolina Principals and Assistant Principals Association, 2007). This new set of standards, titled "North Carolina Standards for School Executives", evaluates school leadership according to a different set of characteristics than the ISLLC Standards (CCSSO, 1996; State Board of Education, 2006). The North Carolina Standards for School Executives are listed in Appendix C.

Whereas the ISLLC Standards required education leadership programs to evaluate prospective principals and assistant principals as, "(having) the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students" according to broad and comprehensive domains, the North Carolina Standards for School Executives asks education leadership preparation programs to evaluate prospective school leaders according to a new role, one of educational leader as "school executive".

An excerpt of the vision statement for the Standards for School Executives reads,

Public education's changed mission dictates the need for a new type of school leader-- an executive instead of an administrator. No longer are school leaders just maintaining the status quo by managing complex operations but just like their

colleagues in business, they must be able to create schools as organizations that can learn and change quickly if they are to improve performance (State Board of Education, 2006).

The North Carolina Standards for School Executives goes on to present eleven talking points that comprise the Philosophical Foundation of the new standards (State Board of Education, 2006). Each point advances the philosophy of the education leader as an executive, rather than an administrator or manager. The Philosophical Foundation for the School Executive Standards can be found in Appendix D.

The “Intended Purposes of the Standards” state, “The main responsibility of the school executive is to create aligned systems of leadership throughout the school and its community” (State Board of Education, 2006). The ISLLC Standards focused on growing educational leaders who were grassroots and hands-on. Examples of this can be found especially in Standards 2, 3, and 7-- requiring educational leaders to have a working knowledge and ability in the areas of teaching and learning, operations, and a pragmatic internship (CCSSO, 1996). The language and spirit of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives lead us to believe the intention of these standards is quite different. The seven standards for School Executives include: strategic leadership, instructional leadership, cultural leadership, human resource leadership, managerial leadership, external development leadership, and micropolitical leadership (State Board of Education, 2006). The Standards for School Executives includes a summary and examples of artifacts for each new standard as well as a list of competencies at the close of the document. Several of the listed competencies for school executives include: change and conflict management, customer focus, delegation, results orientation, and

systems thinking (State Board of Education, 2006). It is clear in studying the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives that the North Carolina State Board of Education intends to usher in a new era and, again, a new paradigm for school leaders.

### **The Study Behind the New Standards**

The North Carolina Standards for School Executives originated from a study funded by the Wallace Foundation, “Making Sense of Leading Schools- A Study of the School Principalship” (Portin et al, 2003). The Wallace Foundation, one of the top 50 wealthiest and most philanthropic foundations in the country, was founded by Dewitt and Lila Wallace, the founders of the Reader’s Digest Association. The Wallace Foundation has three objectives: (1)- expand participation in the arts and culture, (2)- improve after-school learning opportunities, and (3)- strengthen education leadership to improve student achievement (Wallace Foundation 2007). This third mission objective of the foundation was the motivation for the “Making Sense” study, which bore the North Carolina Standards for School Executives.

The purpose of the study was to, “discover ways school leaders can improve student achievement, and to create the conditions necessary to allow those leaders to succeed” (Portin et al, 2003). An excerpt of the Study reads,

Much of the current attention to school leadership looks at all of the things principals ‘might’ do and treats these possibilities as if they are the things all principals ‘should’ do. The result is an overstated picture of the job, one suggesting that if schools are to succeed, principals should take on an increasing array of leadership responsibilities. This study offers a different perspective. Instead of examining what it takes to lead schools in the abstract, it looks at what school leaders actually do (Portin et al, 2003).

The report was based on in-depth interviews with principals, assistant principals, and teachers in 21 schools, from four different cities, across four states. Based on the interviews, the study identified seven critical areas of school leadership:

- instructional
- cultural
- managerial
- human resources
- strategic
- external development
- micropolitical (Portin et al, 2003).

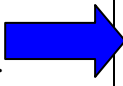
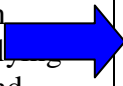
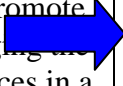
It is interesting to note that the Portin et. al study was motivated by the desire to conduct research to uncover the skills and areas of what “leaders actually do”. This was very much the goal of the ISLLC Standards as well, providing a set of “outcome-based measures with a strong emphasis on behaviors necessary to achieve a broad goal of educational success of all students” (Hart & Pounder, 1999).





### **A Comparison of the Two Sets of Standards**



At this point, it is important that we compare the two sets of standards discussed in this study. We need to set them side-by-side in order to gain an understanding of how much these two sets of standards overlap, if any. It is important for us to identify any commonalities, because a portion of the study sought feedback from participants about the parts of the old standards that should be preserved in the education leadership courses of study and how the new set of standards can best be implemented to meet the needs of education leadership graduates. Table 2.1 below lines up each ISLLC Standard with its corollary in the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. This table displays the

standards which do not appear to have a corollary, allowing the reader to judge for him or herself.

Table 2.1 Correlations of the ISLLC Standards and NC Standards.

ISLLC Standard	North Carolina Standard for School Executive
<p>Standard 1: Vision Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community.</p> 	<p>Standard 1: Strategic Leadership School executives will create conditions that result in strategically re-imagining the school's vision, mission, and goals. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it.</p>
<p>Standard 2: Learning and Teaching Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.</p> 	<p>Standard 2: Instructional Leadership School executives will set high standards for the professional practice of instruction and assessment that result in a no nonsense accountable environment. The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the ongoing peer review of this work and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.</p>
<p>Standard 3: Operations Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment</p> 	<p>Standard 5: Managerial Leadership School executives will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem-solving, communicating expectations and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The school executive must be responsible for the</p>

	monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget decisions as to meet the needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of every day life is critical for staff to be able to focus its energy on improvement.
<p>Standard 4: Communities</p> <p>Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.</p> 	<p>Standard 6: External Development Leadership</p> <p>A school executive will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership. Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but in fact build community, the leader proactively creates with staff opportunities for parents, community and business representatives to participate as “stockholders” in the school such that continued investments of resources and good will are not left to chance.</p>
<p>Standard 5: Ethics</p> <p>Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.</p>	
<p>Standard 6: The Larger Context</p> <p>Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.</p>	
	<p>Standard 3: Cultural Leadership</p> <p>School executives will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school’s culture contributes to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future. A school executive must be able to “reculture” the school if needed to align</p>

	<p>with the school's goals of improving students and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning, and purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school as the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual and collective goals.</p>
	<p><b>Standard 4: Human Resource Leadership</b></p> <p>School executives will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. School executives will ensure that processes and systems are in place that results in the recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development and retention of a high performing staff. The school executive must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching, and must practice fair and consistent evaluation of teachers. The school executive must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.</p>
	<p><b>Standard 7: Micropolitical Leadership</b></p> <p>The school executive will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power and influence to realize the school's vision for success. The executive will also creatively employ an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues, and interests to build social cohesion and to facilitate distributed</p>



	governance and shared decision-making.
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Some of the standards have almost a direct corollary, such as ISLLC Standard 1: Vision with NC Standard 1: Strategic Leadership. Other connections are looser and more indirect, like ISLLC Standard 3: Operations with NC Standard 5: Managerial Leadership. For others, it would be a stretch to make a connection, such as ISLLC Standards 5 and 6 and NC Standards for School Executives 3,4 and 7. One could make the argument that ISLLC Standard 6: The Larger Context encompasses NC Standards 3, 4 and 7, but hardly with the same focus and intensity.

It is hard to compare these two sets of standards without noticing the blatant references and imagery in the new set of standards with a business model. The term school administrator is replaced with “executive”. The new standards include language such as “stockholders” and “investing resources”. The focus of the administrator which was once on “having the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students” is now placed on implementing “processes” and “systems” I would like for us to talk about that next.

### **The Business Model and Education**

While the business model gained and lost popularity several times within the education profession during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Frederick Winslow Taylor is considered the father of the business model, or scientific management, in the United States. Winslow was born in 1856 to an upper class family in Philadelphia (Weisbord, 1987). Taylor earned an engineering degree at the age of 25. Then to the dissatisfaction of his parents, Taylor began working as a common laborer at Enterprise Hydraulic Works in

Philadelphia (Papesh, 2006). Starting at an entry-level position as a shop clerk, Taylor worked his way up to machinist, foreman, maintenance foreman, chief draftsman, research director, and finally chief engineer (Nelson, 1980). Taylor, who always looked for the most efficient way to perform a task, would watch how things were done in the plant, then measure the quantity of work produced. From there, he would examine the process, searching for ways to improve production. Taylor's model for improving business production became known as scientific management. Character traits of scientific management or Taylorism include: efficiency, productivity, higher output, improved quality, lower costs, higher wages, and better working conditions for employees (Nelson, 1980).

The business model in education was popular in the 1920's and fell out of favor in the 1930's. It then regained acclaim in the 1960's and 1970's, and is again making a resurgence (Tyack and Cuban, 1995). In 1983, the *A Nation At Risk* report was published by the National Commission on Excellence. This report ushered in a standards-driven education model. The *A Nation At Risk* report was followed by President George H.W. Bush's Education Summit in 1989. President Bush assembled the nation's governors for a domestic summit on education. The result of this summit shifted the power over education from local and state government authority to federal government authority over education. Many would argue that our nation's public education has been under a business model since these milestone events in 1983 and 1989.

Over the years, a business model for education has been quite popular. Tyack and Cuban (1995) list the three most prominent “corporate-style” education management models as:

1. Management By Objectives (MBO)  
-educators were to clarify objectives and then break the activity needed to reach those objectives down into logical subdivisions.  
(This sounds very much like Scientific Management)
2. The Program Planning and Budgeting System (PPBS)  
-educators were to collect and analyze data in such a way that the cost of programs could be linked to short and long-term goals
3. Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB)  
-educators were to have each unit of study justify its budget in terms of educational objectives, starting from zero

### **Drawbacks of the Business Model In Education**

Tyack and Cuban state,

Applying aspects of corporate management to education simply did not work because educational goals, styles and methods are inherently political and value-laden and not coldly scientific (Tyack and Cuban, 1995).

It is interesting these authors use the word *scientific* in association with corporate management. This is the exact wording of Frederick Taylor’s movement, Scientific Management.

In her book, None of Our Business: Why Business Models Don’t work in Schools, Crystal England makes seven assertions as to why the business model is ineffective and detrimental for the education environment (England, 2003). The seven assertions include:

1. It takes a village to raise a child.

-Corporations don't ask for advice from schools. Why should society think the business world is qualified to give advice to schools?

2. To market, to market.  
-Schools cater to more than one type of customer. Children and parents are both the customer in education. This requires a delicate and huge balancing act.
3. A rose by any other name.  
-Under a business model of education, standards are imposed on the education professionals by people with little to no working knowledge of the education profession. Yet, these standards have incredible power.
4. The good, the bad, the ugly.  
-The educational environment is completely different from the corporate environment. You can't fire your students, the student population changes each year, and everything about the changing society finds its way into the school house.
5. How do I test thee?  
-Student assessment is a huge political chip. Teachers try to teach, but they are forced to "teach to the test".
6. A better mousetrap.  
-Federal, state, and local education agencies are constantly trying to find a better way to do school and can't find one. This assertion discusses vouchers, school choice, charter schools, for-profit schools, and others.
7. No one is left behind the child.  
-This assertion discusses the federal No Child Left Behind legislation and its negative impact on public education.

Others have written about the negative impact of a business model on education as well (Freeman, 2005; Longstreet, 2002; Marshall, 2002; Giroux, 1998). Tyack and Cuban (1995) propose the following five reasons why corporate style management has failed to improve education.

1. Educational goals are diffuse.  
-While businesses may have clear, focused goals, the various goals for education may be very different and difficult to organize.

2. Educational “results” were hard to measure and quantify.  
-How do we accurately measure how much smarter a child is, or whether they are really a better citizen?
3. The methods for reaching educational objectives were often unclear.  
-It is difficult to determine which teaching strategies are best for which students under which conditions.
4. Educational staff lacked appropriate management skills.  
-Many public school districts lacked the analytic skills to gather and interpret the data used in these management techniques.
5. Educators questioned whether corporate style management was worthwhile.  
-Educators complained of the extra work that these management styles required and it was not clear to them how this extra work was going to benefit anyone in the end.

The language and approach of the North Carolina Standards for School Executives raises the question whether North Carolina is again steering toward a business model of leadership.

### **Criticisms of University-Based Preparation Programs**

As we have already discussed, the required skill-set of educational leaders is not a static knowledge base, but rather continues to evolve with the ever changing landscape of public education. University-based educational leadership preparation programs face many challenges, in an attempt to properly train prospective educational leaders. In spite of such a daunting task, university-based programs have faced sharp criticism. The criticisms of preparation programs are numerous and varied. Many education researchers agree, “Educational leadership as an academic field is in trouble. The public as well as practicing school administrators are questioning the usefulness of university-based education leadership preparation programs” (Carr & Fulmer, 2004). Common criticisms can be grouped into one of five categories: (1) slow to follow changes in society, (2)

curriculum/methods/results, (3) lack of grounded practice, (4) non-compliance with ISLLC Standards and NCATE review process, and (5) staffed by people with little pragmatic experience (Andrews & Grogan, 2002; Institute for Educational Leadership, 2000; Bottoms & O'Neill, 2001; Jackson, 2001; Freeman, Knott, & Schwartz, 1997; Restine, 1997).

### **1. Slow to follow changes in society**

University-based education leadership preparation programs are charged with being slow to follow changes in society. As discussed earlier in this section, the landscape and skill-set of school leaders have changed every decade since the inception of the school principalship.

### **2. Curriculum, methods, and results**

Many researchers cite outdated curriculum as a criticism of preparation programs. While the curriculum of preparation programs was once pertinent and effective, it quickly becomes obsolete to the changing leadership needs when it does not follow the changing conceptualization of the work of the principal.

### **3. Lack of grounded practice**

Critics site a lack of grounded practice as a common failing of higher education programs (Williamson & Hudson, 2001). The internship component is common to university-based leadership programs and is used as an apprenticeship opportunity for budding school leaders (Freeman et al, 1997). In the 2001 Annual Meeting of the NCPEA, Williamson and Hudson presented a paper about the importance of the internship component to the successful preparation of educational leaders. Williamson and Hudson

found that historically, internships have not served their purpose of providing sufficient grounded practice for students (Williamson & Hudson, 2001). Students largely fulfill the internship requirement for their education leadership degree at their current work place, or in another comfortable and familiar environment. As a result, students are not stretched to undertake new experiences. The second failing of internships is the workload placed on interns during their experiences (Williamson & Hudson, 2001). Many employers take advantage of the intern and use him or her in ways that benefit the school but not the intern. Daresh (1998) contends internship experiences, “must not only develop competence and confidence in handling day-to-day regularities of schools, they must provide an opportunity for students to think about and reflect on their personal development as school leaders.” Williamson and Hudson contend many internship sites do not fit these criteria.

#### **4. Non-compliance with ISLLC Standards**

Programs are often cited as neglectful in following their chosen set of outcome-based standards. Since the ISLLC Standards are the most prevalent and commonly used set of outcome-based behavioral standards across the country, they are the most frequently cited standards in research for programs being out of compliance.

#### **5. Staffed by people with little pragmatic experience**

A frequent criticism in the literature base proposes that preparation programs are staffed by professors with little clinical experience as practitioners of school leadership. In addition, programs are often charged as providing limited connections between program faculty and students with classroom settings which are too “instructor-centered”

and “classroom-based”. Criticisms often mention a lack of hands-on application with a failure to link content to practice.

One researcher’s quote reminds us to maintain perspective, “Thus far, we have seen little research that discredits educational leadership preparation. However, sweeping condemnation of educational leadership preparation programs is plentiful.” (Young & Creighton, 2002).

### **Suggestions For Improvement**

Over the past 20 years of education leadership preparation reform, university-based programs have scrambled to find more effective approaches for preparing future education leaders (Milstein, 1993; Lashway, 1998; Perrault & Lunnenburg, 2002; Young & Petersen, 2002). Professors tell us reform is not as simple as the application of governing standards or the establishment of a stringent accreditation process. The knowledge base of education leadership is considerably more complex than many other fields. Researchers note that education leadership preparation is not a field with a “static knowledge base that remains constant” (Donmoyer et al., 1995). Rather, the knowledge base of education leadership preparation is affected by the politics, societal values, and other ever-changing influences of the culture at that particular time (Mitchell, 2006).

University-based education leadership preparation programs have taken measures to find different useful and pedagogically effective approaches to teaching and learning. Some of the approaches to improve preparation programs include: problem-based learning, cohorts, collaborative partnerships, field experiences and internships.



### **1. Problem-based learning.**

Problem-based learning centers student learning around professional problems, requiring students to apply their knowledge, experiences, and research skills to solve professional problems. Problem-based learning trains students to utilize teamwork, administrative and project development skills and problem-solving to solve relevant issues they will face as school leaders (Bridges & Hallinger, 1993; Hart & Pounder, 1999).

### **2. Cohorts.**

A study conducted by the Center for the Study of Preparation Programs found that 50% of all university-based education leadership programs used cohorts at the master's level and 80% used cohorts at the doctoral level (McCarthy, 1999). Several studies have discussed the strengths of cohorts. Some of these strengths include: stronger social and interpersonal relationships among students, increased contact with faculty members, better integration into the university, clearer program structure and sequencing, higher program completion rates, greater cohesiveness and the fostering and development of professional networks (Barnett et. al, 2000; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001). Disadvantages include the development of tension between students and power struggles between students and faculty (Teitel, 1997; Barnett et. al, 2000; Scribner & Donaldson, 2001).

### **3. Collaborative Partnerships.**

Many university programs have developed partnerships with external resources in order to strengthen and diversify the program experience (Jackson, 2001). Examples of

partner agencies include, but are not limited to, government social service agencies, local boards of education, schools, counseling practices, and others.

#### **4. Field Experiences.**

Studies regarding the effectiveness and relevance of field experiences to leadership preparation have found that programs must use class work to reinforce learning that occurs in the field, rather than the use of field experiences to reinforce class work, which is the norm (Bridges & Hallinger, 1993). Field experiences providing core learning experiences have proven to be a highly effective pedagogical technique.

#### **5. Internships.**

Several studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of internships and how to improve the internship experience. In the 2001 Annual Meeting of the NCPEA, Williamson and Hudson presented a paper about the importance of the internship component to the successful preparation of educational leaders (Williamson & Hudson, 2001). Daresh (1998) contends that internship experiences, “must not only develop competence and confidence in handling day-to-day regularities of schools, they must provide an opportunity for students to think about and reflect on their personal development as school leaders”.

#### **Examining the Methodologies of Similar Studies**

A key component of a dissertation study literature review is the examination and dissection of the methodologies used in other studies. In examining numerous studies, I selected the methodologies of two studies for components that were used within our study.

The first study we will examine was referenced in Chapter 1, *Career Paths of North Carolina Principal Fellows*, by Dr. Crystal Vail (Vail, 2004). I found multiple areas in the design of Vail's study that are adaptable to this study. Those components are outlined in Table 2.2, below, correlated with how they will be used within this study.

Table 2.2 Methodological Adaptations.

<b>Methodological components of Dr. Vail's study</b>	<b>How those components were adapted for use in this study</b>
Examined the problem by talking with the Principal Fellows Program office	Examined the problem by speaking with the Education Leadership & Cultural Foundations department at UNCG
Used a survey as the data-gathering instrument	Used interviews and a survey as the data gathering instruments
Used a survey over interviewing for 2 reasons- cost of sampling respondents is lower (comparing the cost of a stamp with driving to interview the respondents), takes less time	I used interviews and surveys. The data gathered during the interview phase of research was used to craft the survey instrument.
Interviewing was unrealistic because of the sample number (258)	The sample number was, coincidentally, exactly the same (258)
Survey was designed to take no more than 30 minutes	Survey was designed to take less than 45 minutes
Dr. Vail used guidelines for designing a questionnaire from Berdie & Niebuhr (1986)	I used the Berdie & Niebur guidelines as well as Fink & Kosecoff (1985)
-Do not use technical terms, jargon or complex terms that respondents may not understand	I used this in my survey design.
-Organize the items so they are easy to read and complete	I used this in my survey design.
-Include brief, clear instructions, printed in bold type and in upper and lower case	I used this in my survey design.
-Begin with interesting and non-threatening items	I used this in my survey design.
-Organize the questionnaire in a logical Sequence	I used this in my survey design.
-state each item in as brief a form as Possible	I used this in my survey design.

Wrote questions in a closed form so respondents did not have to write open-ended responses	The interview and survey questions were a combination of closed and open-ended format
Participants received the survey by mail	Participants received the survey by an online survey company.
Participants were asked to return the survey in a postage-paid envelope	Participants returned the survey via email.
An endorsement letter from the director of the Principal Fellows Program was sent with the survey, in hopes of increasing the return rate	An endorsement letter from the ELC department at UNCG was sent with the survey, in hopes of increasing the return rate
A cover letter was sent by the researcher, identifying her as a former Class 2 Principal Fellow	A cover letter was sent, identifying me as an MSA and Ed.S graduate from UNCG

The second study we will examine is *A Value-Added Approach to Program Assessment in Higher Education: Examination of an Educational Leadership Preparation Program*, by Dr. Jimmy Byrd and Cynthia Williams (2006). This study sought to advance a model for evaluating education administrator preparation programs at the individual course level. The study found that of the two preprogram and seven program courses examined, only two had a significant impact on the pass rate on the TExES Principal Certification Exam. Those two courses were Programs and Procedures in Supervision and Public School Law. The researchers advance the hypothesis that these were the two classes with the most impact, because they are the two courses consistently taught by full-time professors. The study contends,

Although the findings derived from this specific study cannot be generalized beyond the specific program examined, the model itself is generalizable and can be used to evaluate a variety of university programs (Byrd & Williams, 2006).

This study focused primarily on searching for a connection between courses and performance on the certification exam. But, a comment was made in the study which I feel connected it philosophically to our study.

No longer can university preparation programs be satisfied with student performance only on the certification exam . . . The real evaluation of the preparation program does not begin until the student has entered the workforce (Byrd & Williams, 2006).

## **Conclusion**

I believe the closing statement of a paper presented by Stine and Stine in 2002 at the Annual Meeting of the National Council of Professors of Educational Administration adequately summarizes the task at hand, not only for their home state of California, but also for education leadership preparation across the entire nation.

The educational community in California public schools has a daunting challenge to meet the needs of a very diverse constituency. The shortage of acceptable candidates for administrative positions only compounds the severity of the task at hand. It is hoped that the posturing and politicizing can be put aside and that all the individuals, organizations, agencies, and institutions are able to work together for the needs of our schools with mutual respect and cooperation.

We will now turn to Chapter Three, where I will describe the methodology used to undertake this study.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Restatement of the Research Problem**

In November of 2006, the North Carolina State Board of Education voted to discontinue the use of the ISLLC Standards as the standards used for the preparation of school administrators. The following month the Board voted in a new set of benchmarks, the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. There are lessons to be learned from the discontinuation of one set of standards and the implementation of another. The cycle is repeating itself. We have a new set of standards and, to some extent, a new skill-set for the preparation of school leaders. At times like these, we are compelled to reflect and learn from our past in order to inform practice and improve our future. Conducting an assessment of graduates as to how they feel an education under the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their administrative roles may yield substantive information that could be used by education leadership programs not only as they usher in a new era under the North Carolina Standards for School Executives, but also for the future when the benchmarks change again.

#### **Purpose, Goals, and Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to discover the effectiveness in using one set of standards for equipping graduates of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro education leadership programs, between the years of 1998-2008, with the skills needed to

be successful in their roles and responsibilities as school leaders. At this stage in the research, the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards was defined as the extent to which one of three education leadership degree programs, based on the ISLLC Standards, prepared them for their duties and responsibilities within the workplace.

This study sought to address the following primary research question:

How do UNCG graduates of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations, between the years 1998-2008, feel their preparation program centered around the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their roles as school leaders?

Secondary questions included:

1. Are there crucial pieces that a program specifically centered around the ISLLC Standards left out?
2. Are there lessons to be learned as the UNCG ELC Department broadens the focus of the Course of Study to address both the NC Standards for School Executives and the ISLCC Standards?

### **Benefits of the Study**

This study has the potential for great significance. Conducting an assessment of graduates as to how they feel an education under one set of standards prepared them for their administrative roles yielded substantive information that can be used by education leadership programs as they usher in a new era, renorming instruction under both sets of standards.

The benefits to individual participants from this study are two-fold. First, participating in this research study provided UNCG graduates with an opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their experiences. Participants may thereby impact the direction of the education leadership program through their feedback. Second, as the ELC

Department uses the feedback to evaluate and adapt instruction, it will change the experience for future graduates, many of whom will work with participants of the study. This information has the potential for a ripple effect, not only for the ELC Department at UNCG, but also for the workplace.

This study contributed to a knowledge base specifically for the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations at UNCG but also for leadership preparation programs as a whole. The data collected within this study may impact decision-making in the way the ELC Department designs and implements instruction, teaching toward both sets of standards.

### **Risks of the Study**

The risks for the research participants were minimal in this study. Research participants were selected using the process outlined in the following section, “Population/Selection of Participants”. After contacting research participants via email, participants submitted their surveys to the online survey website. The software de-identified and compiled participant responses before the researcher was able to retrieve the data, eliminating all risks associated with connecting research participants to their responses. Participants were not identified in any way within the study.

One possible risk within the study was not to the participants but to the researcher. This study was by design intended to yield data in critique of the ELC Department in which I am a student. Under different circumstances, this could cause me to feel intimidated or apprehensive about presenting accurate results. In truth, I was approached by a mentor professor within the ELC department. Since the department



sanctioned this study, it was clear they understood the purposes of this study and the possible data it could yield.

### **Limitations and Biases**

Thomas and Brubaker (2000) advise researchers,

The researcher openly admits to personal bias in selecting interview questions, choosing the people and places that are studied, and adopting theoretical assumptions that influence the interpretation of data. It is important not to feign objectivity but, instead, to inform readers of the sorts of subjectivity that give the research paper its particular texture (p. 16).

The sheer amount of time and energy a researcher puts into a dissertation project almost demands the researcher have a personal interest in the study. Personal interest in a study brings subjectivities. Any researcher who claims to enter a study without a slant or a predisposition about the study in one form or another, is sure to develop those slants and predispositions as the study progresses. The important thing is not to eliminate those predispositions. Surely, that is impossible. Rather, the researcher must recognize those subjectivities and lay them out in plain view so they can be recognized, identified and kept under a close watch.

The subjectivities I brought to this project were two-fold. First, I am a practitioner of K-12 public education leadership. As a matter of camaraderie or out of a sense of professional obligation, I might feel pressured to skew the interpretation of the data in a way that painted the responses of my peers and colleagues in a more positive light or served the agenda of education leadership as a profession. Second, I have a seven year history with the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations at

UNCG as a student. I have earned two degrees, prior to pursuing the Doctorate of Education degree. As evidenced by my tenure as a student, it is clear I have a deep respect for the UNCG School of Education. As such, it could be assumed that I would want to skew the data in favor of the department and paint a more positive picture, in an effort to preserve and protect the reputation of the department.

Knowing these two subjectivities and placing them in full view of the study as I carried out data collection, analysis and interpretation were critical to the trustworthiness of the study.

### **Population/Selection of Participants**

The study enlisted feedback from graduates of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro between the years of 1998-2008. The University of North Carolina at Greensboro began using the ISLLC Standards shortly before 1998 and began the transition to incorporate the new North Carolina Standards for School Executives in 2008. This date range encompassed a period of time in which education leadership students were trained under the ISLLC Standards.

Data was gathered in two phases, interviews and surveys. Research participants for each of the two phases were chosen from the pool of individuals who obtained Masters of School Administration, Specialist in Education, or Doctorate of Education degrees. The following steps were used to select research participants:

1. The researcher obtained a list of ELC graduates (MSA, Ed.S, Ed.D)

from the University's Institutional Research office. It was necessary to

incorporate participants from each of the three graduate degree programs in order to elicit comprehensive feedback regarding the entire education leadership preparation program at UNCG.

2. The list of graduates was then cross-referenced with the list of practicing school leaders for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) produced by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). As we will discuss in further detail shortly, being a current education leadership practitioner was one of the inclusion criterion for the study. Since the purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using one set of benchmark standards, this could only be investigated accurately from the perspective of practicing school administrators. For this reason, only feedback from practitioners was sought within the context of this study.
3. A pool of interview participants were provided by the ELC Department. The researcher selected four candidates to interview. Two candidates were male, two were female. One candidate completed only the Masters of School Administration degree, one was in the process of completing the Ed.S degree in pursuit of an Ed.D degree, one had completed the Ed.S degree and was in pursuit of the Ed.D degree, and one candidate had completed the Ed.D degree. Interview participants varied in their administrative positions. One candidate was a practicing elementary principal, one candidate was a middle school principal, one participant was a practicing high school principal, and one was a district-level administrator. Interview participants varied in years of

experience from 10 years to 22 years of experience in public schools.

Participants were also selected based on varying years as a student in the ELC Department and varying graduation dates. MSA graduation dates ranged from 1999 to 2006. Ed.S graduation dates ranged from 2002 to 2007, and the one participant who held an Ed.D degree graduated in 2004.

4. The following inclusion criteria were applied to interview and survey participants:

- A. Must have been an ELC Department UNCG graduate of the MSA, Ed.S, or Ed.D programs between the years 1998-2008. The researcher chose graduates of an ELC program versus a qualification of only being a student within the range of years, because setting a criterion that participants be graduates established a minimum time period that participants were associated with the department. The minimum timeframe to obtain the MSA required at least a two-year tenure as a student. Another reason the researcher chose graduates was to omit outlier responses from students who may have only taken one or two courses, became disgruntled, and left the program.

- B. Must maintain an active email account with a Local Education Agency in North Carolina. This criterion was necessary as email was the initial and primary means of communication for prospective survey participants. This criterion also ensured the legitimacy that participants were connected with an LEA.

C. Must be a practicing school or district-level public school administrator.

After ensuring participants were connected with an LEA through the use of their active email account, this was employed simply as a follow-up measure to make sure participants were still employed by an LEA and were in a position of education leadership at the site or district level.

Prospective participants were excluded if they failed to meet all of the inclusion criteria.

5. Survey participants were contacted via email. The first communication was a Letter of Introduction/Recruitment Letter sent by the dissertation chair on behalf of the student researcher. The dissertation chair sent the Letter of Introduction for several reasons. First, we felt the first communication coming from the professor would lend his credibility and credentials to the study and show that he did endorse and could vouch for the work of the study. Second, many of the prospective participants knew the professor. We felt the initial communication coming from him might increase the response rates. Third, we ran into a logistical issue. The Survey Monkey software would not let the Letter of Introduction be sent out before the actual survey instrument. The design protocol required the web link to the survey be embedded within the Letter of Introduction. Since we wanted this first communication to be sent in advance of the actual instrument, it was necessary to send it out independently of Survey Monkey. The sheer volume of prospective participants could not support the email communication being sent out by the student researcher's

web-based email browser. The communication had to be sent by the dissertation chair's desktop-based email browser. Still, the principal researcher had to subdivide the list of prospective participants into 11 batches. The Letter of Introduction/Recruitment Letter can be found as Appendix E. The second communication with prospective participants was a Statement of Participant Rights/Consent Form. A web link to the survey was embedded at the end of the Consent Form. A second web link was also embedded within the document, a link to opt out of the study. The Statement of Participant Rights/Consent Form can be found as Appendix F.

6. The number of usable responses dictated the population size. The researcher estimated 250-300 usable survey responses before receiving the list of prospective participants who met the inclusion criteria. The researcher received a list of 354 prospective participants. The researcher attempted to verify the email addresses of each prospective participant. The researcher checked the last known email addresses against a North Carolina Department of Public Instruction list of practicing school principals in North Carolina. The list had flaws. First, the most current list was one year old. Second, the list only included practicing principals, not district level leadership or assistant principals. The researcher then checked addresses against LEA websites. The researcher used internet search engines and colleagues in other school systems to verify any remaining email addresses. In the end, the dissertation chair was able to send the Letter of Introduction to 356 last known email addresses,

representing 300 people. Of the 300 people who were approached as prospective participants to be a part of the study, 42 were dead ends or did not meet the inclusion criteria of the study. After beginning with a raw list of 354 possible names to participate in the study, in the end, the number of legitimate prospective participants was refined to 258.

7. The Letter of Introduction/Recruitment Letter was sent by the dissertation chair on Saturday October 25, 2008. The Consent Form and link to the survey were sent four days later, Wednesday October 29, 2008. A reminder was sent on Monday November 3, 2008 to those who had not completed the survey. A second reminder was sent on Tuesday November 11, 2008 to those who still had not completed the survey. The survey was closed for data collection on Saturday November 15, 2008. The reminder communications to prospective participants can be found as Appendix G.

### **Participant Consent**

Participant consent was attained for both phases of the study. Interview participants received an oral explanation of the purpose and procedures, potential risks, potential benefits, and consent information. Each participant signed a traditional “long” consent form. A copy of the interview consent form can be found as Appendix H.

Survey participants received an electronic consent form in the initial email. The consent form contained a description of the study purpose and procedures, potential risks, potential benefits, and consent information. Participants declared consent to participate

in the study by proceeding forward with a link to the survey instrument. A copy of the survey consent form is attached as Appendix F.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board approved the research and consent forms used within this study.

### **Research Methodologies & Data Collection Instruments**

Leedy and Ormrod (2001) describe research design as, “the complete strategy of attack on the central research problem”. If the central research problem was to learn lessons from the use of one set of benchmark standards as another set of standards is incorporated into practice, then the following section outlines the plan of attack that was used to solve this problem.

#### **A. Interviews**

In the early stages of this study, I did not plan to use interviews as a data collection instrument. My plan was to use a survey as the primary and sole means to gather data. Through the natural evolution of the study and input from the dissertation committee, it became clear there was a step missing in the process. I wished to seek feedback from graduates using a survey, but I realized I had created a void in the methodology of the study by not using research to construct the most effective survey instrument. In an effort to fill the void, it became clear that I needed to conduct a small-scale preliminary phase of research to gather data. The data gathered in the preliminary phase would then be used to craft the most effective and appropriate survey instrument for addressing the goals of the study.



To gather the necessary data, I interviewed four graduates of the ELC Department at UNCG. Interview participants were held to the same inclusion and exclusion criteria as the survey participants. A description of the interview participants was detailed in the previous section, “Population/Selection of Participants”. It was my goal to maintain a small sample size while simultaneously selecting participants who encompassed the range of years that would be polled in the survey, 1998-2008. I also sought to ensure diversity in the categories of sex, years of experience, years attending UNCG, degrees attained, current job titles, and Local Education Agency employers.

The goal of the interviews was to pilot the types of questions and themes that would be investigated in the survey. I hoped to uncover any trends in the answers of participants that might warrant a deeper focus in the survey instrument. I also wanted to discover the specific language- both in my questioning, and the language used by the participants in responses- that I should incorporate into the survey questions.

Each interview was conducted one-on-one. As I mentioned earlier, the interviews were audio-taped so they could later be transcribed and coded. Interview sessions lasted 45 minutes to an hour. In the interviews it became clear that sessions approaching an hour in length grew monotonous and repetitive. Additionally, thirty minutes would have been too short as it would not have provided enough time for the researcher to gather demographic data and build a rapport with the interview participants before discussing the content questions of the interview. The most productive and beneficial interview length was 45 minutes. Interviews were conducted in each administrator’s office. The only exception was the district-level administrator who preferred to conduct the interview

away from her office due to distractions and interruptions. The following general protocol was used in each of the interviews:

1. What degree(s) have you obtained from UNCG?
2. What year(s) did you graduate?
3. What is your current job title?
4. In which school system do you work?
5. How long have you been in the field of Education?
6. How well did the UNCG Educational Leadership Department prepare you for school administration? Explain.
7. Discuss some components of your graduate experience you felt were helpful to your current role.
8. What are some areas you wish would have been addressed more?
9. If you could change one thing about your graduate experience, what would it be and why?

Interviewees were given a copy of the Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium Standards to answer the following questions.

10. Do you believe the ELC Department emphasized any of these more than others? If so, which ones were emphasized? Share examples.
11. Do you believe the ELC Department de-emphasized any of these standards? If so, which ones were de-emphasized? Share examples.
12. Does your school district emphasize any of these more than others? Explain.

13. Does your school district de-emphasize any of these more than others? Explain.

Under most circumstances, it would be appropriate to report the findings of the interviews in the next chapter, “Presentation of Findings”. In this situation, I believe it is prudent to report the findings of the interviews here in the “Methodology” chapter. My rationale is that these results were necessary to properly craft the survey instrument. Analysis of the interview data was sequentially a crucial piece of the methodology for the remainder of the study, thereby placing its need here in the methodology design and not later, in the traditional placement where findings are reported.

The interviews yielded some fascinating data, especially once we got into the core questions which gathered data on graduates’ perceptions about how the ISLLC Standards were addressed in their Courses of Study. Some very clear themes emerged. The intentionality of keeping the interviews somewhat open-ended proved productive as well. Some unexpected themes also arose from the interviews. These unexpected themes did relate to the purpose of the study. In both cases- gathering the intended data and the unexpected data- the interviews accomplished the goal of providing direction to help mold the language and construction of the questions for the survey instrument.

The following section outlines some of the data gathered in the interviews and how that data was used in the construction of the survey.

**Questions 1-5 asked demographic questions.**

This information was discussed in the previous section, “Population/Selection of Participants”.

**Question 6: How well did the UNCG Educational Leadership Department prepare you for school administration? Explain.**

The Data

All four respondents indicated the Education Leadership Department at UNCG prepared them for school administration. Respondent 1 said the department did a “fair job”. Respondents 2 and 3 shared identical comments, “I felt prepared by the MSA program”. Respondent 4 said the department did a “good” job. What was interesting was not that all four respondents felt the ELC Department did a good job, but rather the information that was volunteered as each of them expounded on their responses. One said it prepared them for “being an assistant principal, but most of my confidence came from my internship.” Another interviewee discussed how she “needed a finance course” and the department relied heavily on case studies to provide the real world or practical component of the teaching and learning. One of the respondents remarked, “The law part was good and the internship component was good”. The fourth participant said, “the program was more about philosophy than practice . . . they left the practice up to the internships”.

Significance of the Data

A trend began to already form in the first question. Respondents stressed the importance of practical experience and a need for the balance of theory and practice in the Courses of Study. Also, respondents volunteered feedback about components of their program that were good and components that required deeper exposure. Exposure to law and the internships were mentioned as things that were good. The need for more finance and real world experiences were mentioned as areas in need of more exposure. Also,

case studies were mentioned in the context of being useful, but they were interpreted or perceived by the graduates as a substitute for real world experiences.

**Question 7: Discuss some components of your graduate experience you felt were helpful to your current role.**

The Data

Two themes presented themselves in response to this question. The first theme revolved around the benefit of taking Personal Leadership Assessment with Dr. Coble during the Ed.S and Ed.D course of study. The three participants who either had or were in pursuit of their Ed.D all mentioned how integral that particular course was in their learning process.

In the second theme that arose, interview participants mentioned there was not enough instruction on the “nuts and bolts” of being an administrator.

Significance of the Data

The information regarding appreciation and affirmation of the Personal Leadership Assessment course is pertinent because it points to an area of instruction graduates felt should be included in the MSA Course of Study. In fact, Respondent 3 said, “Probably the most helpful for me was, no doubt, Larry Coble’s class we had on the weekends- the personal assessment (class). I wish we would have had that as part of the MSA. It really honed in on what leadership skills are. It really focused on being transitional. It certainly helped me for my role now.” That same participant later said in the interview, “See, Standards Six- The Larger Context, yes I understand what it meant to be a principal, but I think that if I would have understood my leadership style in the MSA, I would have been a lot better at especially understanding the politics and

economics and how you play the game.” This information contributed to the development of several survey items including questions about how effective the ELC Department was in addressing each standard and questions eliciting feedback about specific pieces the program did a good job on and conversely, pieces the program left out.

**Question 8: What are some areas you wish would have been addressed more?**

The Data

When I posed this question, respondents answered in one of two ways. Participants either answered the question directly by naming issues that could have been addressed more, or they answered the question indirectly by discussing components that were addressed too much. Those who answered the question directly mentioned issues of budget, finance, personnel issues- such as documentation and Action Plans, and the practical day-to-day actual administrative issues within schools. Those that answered the question indirectly cited a focus that was too heavy on philosophy and theory, color, gender, ethnicity, race and cultural issues within the curriculum.

Significance of the Data

The significance of this data is that it points to the reoccurrence of two pieces of information. First, budget/finance and personnel issues were brought up again as areas under-represented in the course of study. These areas are represented in the ISLLC Standards as Standard Three- Operations. I believe the data gathered up to this point validated the legitimacy of asking a question in the survey about which of the ISLLC Standards were neglected within the ELC Course of Study. We will see the same reoccurrences of data again in future interview questions.

The second piece of data that re-emerged in this question was the reference to an inappropriate balance between theory and practice. This is one of the unexpected pieces of data I mentioned earlier that relates to the purpose of this study. While this study at its roots is seeking to understand how graduates feel their education lined up to the ISLLC Standards and how that translated into meeting the needs of their job roles, it is also very subtly trying to answer another question along the way. That question is, “*how* does the UNCG ELC Department accomplish this goal of teaching a set of standards, and what feedback do graduates have about how to revise the course of study and teaching methods to more appropriately align instruction to a set of standards and simultaneously address the needs of the workplace?” This undercurrent in the interview responses about the balance of theory and practice addresses this question. I believed this unexpected data was so relevant to the purpose of this study that I built it in to the survey as several questions asking about this issue of theory versus practice.

**Question 9: If you could change one thing about your graduate experience, what would it be and why?**

The Data

The intent of this question was to broaden the scope to a maximum width, being very general and ambiguous in nature, to see what happened. The goal was to see if there would be any data trends in answers from a question this broad in scope. Answers varied wildly in response to this question. Respondent 1 included multiple parts in his answer. He indicated that he wished there were more “real-life practical discussions,” more about budget, and he also saw a need for more school-level administrative experience across the ELC Department faculty. Respondent 2 indicated that if she could change one thing

about her graduate experience, she wished there were a more definite roadmap to help doctoral students through the dissertation process. In asking follow-up questions of this respondent, she cited examples in which some peers used the required assignments in the last courses to get a jump start on the first chapters of their dissertation. This respondent was unaware that doctoral students were permitted to do that. As a result, her dissertation experience has taken longer than some of her peers because she started from scratch after the Comprehensive Examination process. Respondent 3 answered this question, “Some courses had no relevance.” She also went on to suggest the need for more alignment across the courses. This interviewee cited several examples in which the curriculum in classes overlapped. Respondent 4 answered this question from still a different angle. His response included talk of professors who were unorganized. He went on to discuss examples of professors who were harsh in their grading methods, yet ambiguous and undefined in the communication of their expectations.

### Significance of the Data

At first glance it may appear that the wide range of answers to this question reveals a lack of information that could be used to help the survey process. I would disagree. I contend that the responses to this question yield some of the most useful information that helped guide the second phase of research. The responses to this question reminded me, as the researcher, there is a need to keep survey questions very directed and specific. When I ask a question that is too vague and undirected, I get results like I received in this question. The answers were scattered and unrefined. Comparing the data I received in this question to the data obtained in previous questions,



it is clear those questions were more appropriate. They were focused and had a purpose, but not so specific that they led respondents to an answer they thought I was taking them toward.

The five following questions provided a great deal of data. First, clear trends were evident in the responses. Second, the answers to these questions drew attention to areas that could be investigated to a deeper level in the survey.

**Question 10: Do you believe the ELC Department emphasized any of (the ISLLC Standards) more than others? If so, which ones were emphasized? Share examples.**

#### The Data

All four of the graduates stated that *vision* was one of the ISLLC Standards most emphasized in their program. Not only was this the first standard mentioned in every answer, but it was also the standard the respondents were most emphatic about when answering this question. One respondent stated, “Vision for sure!” Another said, “I think vision was something that was helpful. We spent a lot of time on critical reflection (about) how to become an effective visionary leader”. Three of the four respondents cited Standard 4- Communities as a standard that was emphasized. Three of the four stated that Standard 5- Ethics was emphasized in their course of study. Three of the four also cited Standard 6- The Larger Context as a theme stressed in their program. When discussing Standard 6, one of the interviewees stated, “I think (Standard 6) was one of the highlighted components of the program”.

#### Significance of the Data

Some clear trends become evident with this question. It reaffirmed for me as the researcher that the line of questioning I wanted to primarily focus on in the survey was on

track. These responses encouraged me to dig deeper in the survey. First, asking this same line of questioning on a much larger scale would either confirm or reject the early trends noted on a much smaller scale here in the interviews. Second, these responses created another question, “If these were the standards you felt were emphasized in your course of study, what were some examples from your graduate experience that reinforce this answer?”

**Question 11: Do you believe the ELC Department de-emphasized any of (the ISLLC Standards)? If so, which ones were de-emphasized? Share examples.**

#### The Data

This question was possibly the most telling of the entire interview. All four interviews independently and unanimously stated that Standard 3- Operations was the most de-emphasized or under-represented of the standards. Respondent 1 stated, “I believe that the Operations, Standard 3, was neglected. That is the area that I believe was really not a focal point of (the) instruction.” Respondent 2 stated, “I will go back to Operations . . . I think this area is a lot like student teaching. Until you are student teaching, you don’t understand what it all means. You can do all the internships in the world, but until it is your school, you don’t understand what it all means. I really feel like I needed more budget and I feel like I needed more on resources and how to use your resources.” Respondent 3 stated, “I think the (ELC Department) could have done a better job with the operations piece . . . the Ed. Leadership Department needs to spend more time on giving students strategies that are effective.” Respondent 4 answered, I think primarily Standard 3- Operations. There were virtually no discussions on how that actually looks in a school. Coming into a school, there is a pretty significant learning

curve. I felt coming into the principalship that I had the knowledge and broad perspectives of the school, but the nuts and bolts, it was outside of the context of UNCG that I was exposed to and learned those things.”

### Significance of the Data

In analysis of the responses, the first thing we notice of significance is that this issue of theory versus practice came up again. This further warrants the need to ask several questions in the survey related to this issue.

The second piece of information is that again, we have some data, but can’t really do anything with it. My question stopped short of probing as far as it needed. The question yielded data that Standard 3- Operations was the least taught standard, but what past that? We don’t learn enough information from these answers to make a sensible recommendation for improvement. The answers beg a deeper layer of understanding, “Specifically what did you not get enough of?”, “How would you advise professors to improve instruction in this area?” These are all questions that the interview phase of research helped me develop for the survey phase.

**Question 12: Does your school system emphasize any of (the ISLLC Standards) more than others? Explain.**

### The Data

This data was very interesting. All four of the respondents cited different standards as areas emphasized by their school system. Three school systems were represented by the four interviewees. Even the two individuals who shared the same employing school system gave different answers. Responses ranged from Standard 1- Vision to Standard 2- Teaching and Learning to Standard 3-Operations and Standard 5-

Ethics. The only two standards not cited were Standard 4- Communities and Standard 6- The Larger Context.

#### Significance of the Data

It appeared that the way respondents answered the question was heavily dependent on their circumstances and experiences. I didn't think this question should be completely taken out of the survey. I felt that we might still find a pattern or some "method to the madness" when we collected the same data on a much larger scale. The potential benefit from this question is significant. It could springboard future research in such areas as the degree of impact a superintendent has on the standards stressed in a school system, administrators' perceptions about what is emphasized and not emphasized by district-level leadership, or even research about the standards emphasized in different systems to assess whether there is a correlation between which standards are stressed in various types of school systems.

**Question 13: Does your school district de-emphasize any of (the ISLLC Standards) more than others? Explain.**

#### The Data

While the data seemed to be scrambled and without pattern, some of the qualitative data gathered from this question was rich. Standard 4- Communities, Standard 5- Ethics and Standard 6- The Larger Context were the standards de-emphasized by school systems. One example of the rich description shared in response to this question came from Respondent 4, "I don't think our county cares as much about communities and diversity and about what each person brings to the school in terms of their experiences and lives. Race, sex, . . . I don't think our county looks at those

variables as critically as we were taught at UNCG. I think our county does not appreciate those perspectives or look as heavily into those areas.” Respondent 3 answered, “Ethics! Well, it depends on who it is. Some people are punished while others are ignored.”

#### Significance of the Data

This is an example, like we talked about in the last question in which the answer was heavily dependent on their circumstances and experiences. Also like the last question, I don’t think the question needed to be removed from the survey. While this question was unsuccessful on this small scale, I wanted to see if it could yield any information on a larger scale.

**Question 14: Do you believe your Course of Study exercised an appropriate balance between theory and practice? Explain.**

#### The Data

This question was not in the planned protocol for the interviews. As we have discussed in the presentation and analyses of data from the previous questions, this theme kept rising to the surface. I believe it is pertinent and aligned with the purpose and goals of the study. For these reasons, I included it at the close of the first interview and added it to the protocol of the second, third and fourth interviews. I adjusted and rephrased the question with each interview. Remember, the goal of this whole first phase of research was to help construct the best survey instrument. By changing and revising the wording of this question with each interview, I was able to take the question through an evolution and eventually end up with a prompt that would be most appropriate for the survey.

The question initially started with the original wording cited above. In the first interview, the respondent said he felt it was not an appropriate balance. A problem

presented itself because I did not have a way to understand the degree to which this person felt the balance was askew. So, by the third interview, I began asking the interviewees to translate their feelings to a 100 point scale, describing their perceptions of the amount of theory and the amount of practice. I then realized that I needed to create a reference point in each person's perceptions of what they thought the balance should be, in order to know how far askew they thought their course of study was. So, I asked a follow-up question of the respondents about what they thought the balance should be on a 100 point scale.

All four of the interviewees cited an inappropriate balance between theory and practice. Two of the four said the current focus is 80% theory and 20% practice. While the first two did not translate their opinions into percentages, they did provide qualitative descriptions of their opinions. Respondent 3 said, "It is definitely off balance. Some people need that theory. It is good to an extent. Then, give me the nuts and bolts I need to do the job." Respondent 4 said,

I would try to get as many real-world experiences as possible . . . get people working in schools where you can apply the knowledge gained in the classroom. As a practitioner, it was helpful to have (professors) who were in the field recently and could communicate clearly about those standards and how to apply them to real life and your day-to-day experiences, bridging the gap between the philosophical, getting out in the schools and connecting theory to practice.

### Significance of the Data

The significance of this data is straight-forward. Among the small sample size, every person polled emphatically echoed an incongruence between the amount of theory and practice in the course of study. The data pointed to the need for a deeper

investigation in the survey instrument. Due to this data, the survey instrument contained several questions that attempted to dig deeper into this issue for a better understanding.

## **B. Survey**

In their book, *Theses and Dissertations: A guide to planning, research, and writing*, Thomas and Brubaker discuss five qualitative data collection techniques: observations, content analyses, interviews, questionnaires, and tests. Cresswell (1998) also cites four “forms” of data: observations, interviews, documents, and audio-visual materials. Cresswell discusses new forms of data that have been emerging as legitimate forms of data for a qualitative study: journaling, text from email messages, and observing through videotapes and photographs (p.120).

When I began planning the methodology of data collection for this study, a key goal was to identify the most appropriate form of data collection that would best accomplish the purposes and objectives of the study. I first considered using interviews as the primary instrument. I knew that it was a personal approach and might enlist the most honest and candid feedback. While I did choose to use interviewing for the first phase of research, there was a reason I did not use it as the primary instrument. Interviewing is time consuming and constricts the sample size. While interviewing can draw out deep, rich and meaningful data from participants, the sample size remains very small. Conducting a questionnaire on the other hand compromises the personal one-on-one interaction between the researcher and the interviewee, but it allows for a larger sample size and thereby a larger pool of answers on a given subject. In the end, I chose to sacrifice the depth of responses for a wider breadth of answers. I realize any time a

researcher chooses quantity over quality, that study risks being labeled as a quantitative study, but I firmly believe the nature of the data gathered retains the identity of a qualitative study. Thomas and Brubaker (2000) make the same point,

It should be apparent that many interview questions could be presented to respondents in questionnaire form rather than as part of a personal conversation. Distributing questionnaires to a group of participants enables the researcher to save the time that interviewing would require. In addition, a far larger number of people can participate in a questionnaire survey than would be possible through individual interviews (p.153).

Since the goal of this study was to enlist feedback from ELC graduates about their experiences specifically related to their ISLLC-based course of study, it stood to reason that receiving and analyzing responses from 200 people across a ten year period would yield a more accurate reflection than interviewing ten people. In the end, I chose to follow Thomas and Brubaker's (2000) guidelines for questionnaires while incorporating Cresswell's (1998) acceptance of email as a valid vehicle for data collection.

Thomas and Brubaker recognize four different item types of questions within questionnaires: (a) dual choice, (b) multiple choice, (c) short answer, and (d) narrative or essay. The survey questionnaire used within this study utilized each of the first three item types.

The sample size for the survey phase of research was dependent on several criteria. First, the survey sought to understand the experience of ELC department graduates. Being an ELC department graduate was the first limiting factor that influenced the sample size. Second, the focus of the study was specifically interested in graduates' experiences as they related to the ISLLC standards. As we have already



discussed, the ELC department aligned its instruction to the ISLLC Standards from 1998 to 2008, at which time the NC Standards For School Executives were also incorporated. The timeframe of being a student between the years of 1998-2008 was the second limiting factor. The third limiting factor was that these ELC graduates between the years of 1998-2008 had to also be practicing administrators. Because a component of the study sought to understand how the graduate's education addressed the job requirements of the workplace, it was necessary to sample only practicing building or district-level administrators.

All of the prospective survey participants who met the criteria for the study were contacted via email and invited to participate in the study. The danger in creating a population sample using these means was not that the sample size would be too small but rather that it would be too large. Since this was a qualitative study, each survey contained open-ended descriptive data that had to be read and interpreted. The options were weighed about whether to trim down the prospective participant list before extending the invitation to participate or to wait until after the responses were returned before making the decision about trimming down the number of responses to use. Since both of these options could create the misperception that data was being selectively manipulated, the decision was made to extend the invitation to all of the individuals who met the first three inclusion criteria. With a return rate averaging 25%-40% for similar studies with similar populations, it was reasonable to carry forward and expect the total number of usable responses to be within a manageable range of 75-120.

The first step in the selection of survey candidates was to compile a list of individuals who met the inclusion criteria. The inclusion criteria for this study included: (a) UNCG graduate between the years of 1998-2008, (b) graduated with a Masters of School Administration, Specialist in Education, or Doctorate of Education degree, (c) maintain an active email account with a Local Education Agency in North Carolina, and (d) be a practicing public school administrator at the school or district level. Prospective survey participants were excluded if they did not fulfill all of the inclusion criteria.

The principal researcher obtained a list of ELC graduates, within the date range of the study, from the university's Office of Institutional Research. This action ensured two of the inclusion criteria- first, that prospective participants were in fact graduates of one of the three ELC degree programs, and second, that the candidates fell into the date range of the study. The list from the Office of Institutional Research was cross-referenced with email addresses on file at the university and the database of practicing public school administrators at the Department of Public Instruction. This measure guaranteed one of the last two inclusion criteria-- that survey candidates have active email accounts with Local Education Agencies. The last criterion was addressed in the survey. As we will discuss shortly, the first portion of the survey instrument asked demographic questions. Question 5 states, "Are you currently a practicing school or district level administrator?" Respondents who answered, "no" were disqualified from the study based on having met one of the exclusion criteria.

I researched numerous online survey companies in attempt to find the software that would best meet the needs of this study. I quickly learned there are several options

which set the different survey companies apart. Most companies offer several tiers of services- the first tier being free, all the way up to a corporate level, costing fifty to sixty dollars per month. The options which set each company and each tier of service apart relate to the number of questions allowed in the survey and the number of surveys the researcher can send.

The leading companies include Constant Contact, Poll Daddy, Question Pro, and Survey Monkey. I chose to use Survey Monkey. This web-based survey company offers researchers the most options and choices in survey design of the four leading companies. It is also the most used survey tool on the web, with 80% of Fortune 100 companies using Survey Monkey. Additionally, Survey Monkey is financially supported by the customers, not advertisers, reducing the amount of clutter and distractions within the website.

Survey Monkey offered three tiers (Survey Monkey, 2008). Those tiers are described in Table 3.1, below.

Table 3.1 Survey Monkey Tiers.

<b>Tier</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b># of Surveys</b>	<b># of Questions/Survey</b>
Basic	Free	100	10
Monthly Pro	\$19.95/month	1000	Unlimited
Annual Pro	\$200.00/year	Unlimited	Unlimited

It was not necessary to purchase the service for a year and the study did not call for a large number of surveys, so the Annual Pro tier was not necessary. The Basic tier was also not appropriate because I needed to send out more than 100 surveys and the survey design called for more than 10 questions. I elected to use the Monthly Pro tier.

The survey was disseminated via email. A web link to the survey was embedded within the email sent to each participant. The web link to the survey was accompanied by a preceding document, the Consent Form. The Consent Form was discussed in the previous sections, “Population/Selection of Participants and “Participant Consent”. A copy of the Consent form can be found as Appendix F.

The survey instrument can be found as Appendix G. The first 17 questions gathered demographic information. As the data was sorted and filtered, the answers from these demographic questions allowed the researcher to look for trends and themes among specific demographics. The next section of eight questions, General Questions, were needs assessment questions, attempting to understand the perceptions of graduates about their program and why they chose UNCG for graduate school. The third section of seven questions, The ISLLC Standards, gathered information about the ISLLC Standards. These questions addressed the heart of the study, seeking to understand graduates’ perceptions about their ISLLC-based education. It was the goal of these questions to ascertain how closely these standards are tied to the work of school leaders and how well graduates felt the ELC Department had prepared them for this work. The last section of six questions gathered information about the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. These questions sought information that would be helpful to education leadership programs in North Carolina as they adapt instruction to align with this new set of standards.

As this study developed, I was faced with making a decision about when to disseminate the survey and gather data. The options included spring, summer, and fall.

In examining each of these possibilities, I made the decision of when to conduct the study based on a time within the school calendar I believed would yield the greatest number of responses. I did not believe late spring would be the best time. Keep in mind this study focused on practitioners of school leadership-- individuals with MSA, Ed.S, or Ed.D degrees who practice educational administration at the school or district level. In late spring, practitioners are busy with state testing and the hectic work of closing out a school year. Early summer also would not have been a convenient time for administrators. As with late spring, administrators are busy hiring personnel for the following school year and carrying out the visioning process for the following year. Late summer was also not a good time to survey site-based and district level leaders as they are making last minute preparations for the new school year. I decided to disperse the survey and collect data in the fall.

A timeframe for the project was established.

1. One month was allocated to gather data. Respondents who did not return the completed survey after the initial invitation were prompted again. Non-respondents were prompted one last time, a week later. At the end of the month, the study proceeded forward with data analysis. I learned a valuable lesson during this stage of the process. Even though I had allocated one month to gather the data, I quickly learned there was not a need to leave the window open that long to receive responses. The Letter of Introduction or recruitment letter was sent on Saturday, October 25, 2008. The actual survey was first sent on Wednesday October 29, 2008. Seventy-six surveys were completed within

the first 72 hours. The window remained open and another 10 surveys were returned between the 29<sup>th</sup> and when the first reminder was sent on Monday November 3, 2008. Another 24 surveys were returned within 72 hours of the first reminder. Only 13 additional surveys were returned between November 7, 2008 and when the survey was closed on Saturday November 15, 2008.

2. One month was allocated to organize the data and present the findings.
3. One month was allocated to analyze and interpret the data.
4. One to two months was allocated to summarize the study, form conclusions, and propose recommendations.

### **Data Analysis**

Cresswell (1998) states, “Undoubtedly, no consensus exists for the analysis of the forms of qualitative data”. When deciding on the best analysis technique or method for the appropriate qualitative tradition, Cresswell proposes,

Data analysis is not off-the-shelf; rather, it is custom-built, revised and choreographed. Qualitative researchers learn by doing. This leads critics to claim that qualitative research is largely intuitive, soft, and relativistic or that qualitative data analysts fall back on the three ‘I’s’ - insight, intuition, and impression (p. 143).

Keeping this in mind, the researcher still needs an overall game plan or at least a starting approach by which he or she plans to begin analyzing the data. Knowing that my procedures and approach to analyzing the data were subject to change and adapt as I analyzed the data and discovered more efficient and effective means for this specific study, I chose the following model to follow during the data analysis phase of the study.

Creswell (1998) proposes a “Data Analysis Spiral”. Figure 3.1, below, provides a representation of this model.

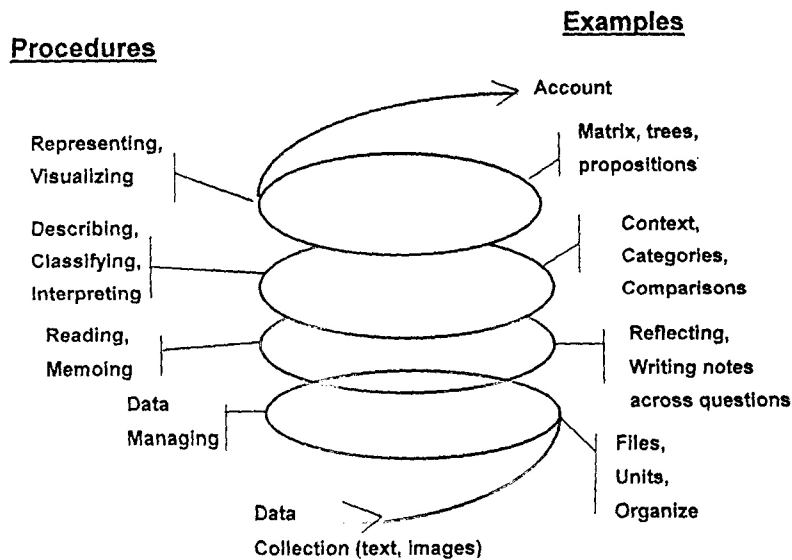


Figure 3.1 Data Analysis Spiral.

The spiral of data analysis begins with the collection of data. The process of analysis then enters the first loop in the spiral, data management. The researcher organizes the data into a management system. Data management methods include file folders, index cards, or computer files. One unique characteristic of this analysis model is that it accommodates and anticipates the need for the researcher to revise their procedure as they discover new methods that would be more effective within each step. If the researcher began his or her data management using a file folder system then realized using index cards would be more efficient, this model recognizes the need to allow for such changes.

The second loop in the model is reading and memoing. The objective of this step is for the researcher to get an overall sense of themes and trends. In the example of our study, this step might have been accomplished by reading all the surveys one or two times in one sitting, and jotting general observations in the margins.

The third loop is characterized by description, classification and interpretation. This loop represents the core of data analysis. In this step, a researcher needs to develop a classification system, boiling the large volume of individual pieces of datum down into usable chunks of information. In this loop, the researcher is looking for any categories or dimensions that exist within the data. Also within this step, the researcher begins to make sense of the data and the story it tells. In the last phase or step of the spiral, the researcher looks for a way to package and present the data. This step seeks to form a conceptual framework, often in the form of a visual map, matrix or other model that accurately and succinctly represents the story being told by the data.

Table 3.2, below, summarizes the methods I used in the data analysis phase of this study.

Table 3.2 Phases of Data Analysis Spiral.

<b>Phase of Data Analysis Spiral</b>	<b>Proposed Methods To Be Employed</b>
Data managing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Print hard copies of the surveys</li> <li>• Create system of organizing and compiling respondent answers</li> <li>• Print hard copies of compiled data</li> </ul>
Reading, Memoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read through all surveys one to two times in single sitting</li> <li>• Make margin notes</li> <li>• Form initial codes</li> </ul>
Describing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe initial themes observed</li> </ul>
Classifying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in open coding</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investigate the need for axial coding</li> <li>• Group statements from open-ended responses into meaning units</li> </ul>
Interpreting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an overall description or essence of the experience</li> </ul>
Representing/Visualizing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Present a narration of the experience</li> </ul>

## Summary

This study used a mixed methods approach. Interviews were utilized in the first phase of research to craft the most appropriate and effective survey instrument. Four UNCG Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations graduates were interviewed. The interview phase yielded very beneficial information which aided in the construction of the survey. A survey questionnaire was used as the primary data collection instrument. After examining several different modes of data collection, the survey was deemed the most appropriate method of data collection for this study. Since the study sought to understand the perceptions and feelings of graduates, regarding their ISLLC-based education in the ELC Department over a 10 year period, it was necessary to employ a relatively large sample size in relation to other qualitative studies. A web-based survey company, Survey Monkey, was chosen as the delivery method for distributing the data collection instrument.

Creswell's (1998) "Data Analysis Spiral" was used as the model to guide the analysis phase of the study. This model was selected because it allows for continuous revision and change throughout the entire analysis phase of the research project.

The great Chinese philosopher Confucius once said, "By three methods we may learn wisdom: first, by reflection, which is noblest; second, by imitation, which is easiest; and

third by experience, which is the bitterest” (Brainy Media, 2008). This study sought to use all three methods to accomplish the goals of the study-- experience as I designed the study, gathered and analyzed the data, imitation as I examined the methodologies of other studies as discussed in the previous chapter, and reflection as the study analyzed data to form conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER IV**

### **PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

The criteria used for the selection of participants was discussed in the Methodology chapter under “Population/Selection of Participants”. The researcher began with a list of 437 email addresses, representing 354 people. This list was obtained by the dissertation chair from the Office of Institutional Research at the university. Upon receiving this list, the student researcher first began by verifying the names and email addresses of these individuals. It was necessary to clean up the list, making sure contact information was current. The researcher discovered that much of the information was in fact not current and required a great deal of updating. Three weeks were spent locating individuals and updating their contact information. For some of the individuals, we knew what school system they worked in but did not have an email address. For others, we knew their county and state of residence but did not have any contact information. Some of the individuals had moved, switched jobs, and had to be located with no known information. In the end, the Letter of Introduction or recruitment letter was emailed to 356 email addresses representing 300 people. The Letter of Introduction can be found as Appendix E. The Letter of Introduction was the first communication with prospective participants. The letter explained the study. It also gave prospective participants an opportunity to provide a different email address if they preferred the survey be sent to a

different email account. The Letter of Introduction also provided instructions for those who wished to opt out of participation in the survey. From the initial number of 300 potential participants, four emailed back asking to be removed from the study, or 1.3%. Three individuals, or 1%, asked that the link to the survey be sent to a different email account. The email addresses for 42 of the prospective participants, or 14%, were invalid. Those 14% were dead ends. We had exhausted all leads to locate them.

After all these steps, I was left with a remaining population sample for the study of 258 individuals. It was discussed in the previous chapter that return rates on similar studies range between 25% to 40%. The number of individuals who participated in this study by completing a survey was 123 or 47.7%. I had originally planned to exclude any respondents from the study who were not practicing school or district-level administrators. After discussing this issue with the dissertation chair, we decided to leave those individuals in the study. The professor made a good point. These individuals graduated from the program and could answer all of the questions as well as the respondents who were practicing administrators, with the exception of the questions that referred to how the preparation coincided with their work as school leaders. We agreed to segregate the data into two groups on key questions, those who were practicing administrators and those who were not, in order to examine the two sets of data for any differing trends or points of interest between the two groups.

Segregating these two sets of data was accomplished easily by applying a filter to the survey software based on participants' responses to Demographic Question Number 5, "Are you a practicing school or district-level administrator?".

In the following sections, we will present and analyze the data from each question within each of the four subsections of the survey. In the questions where answers are dependent on administrator experience, the data will be disaggregated into the two segregated groups. Several of the questions allowed for open-ended response. The reader will be provided with the raw data from the open-ended responses. Presenting all of the survey data will be lengthy, but the transparency in providing this data, unabridged, is important. Open-ended responses were left untouched, with the exception of an occasional grammatical correction to enhance readability. In two cases, Demographic Data Questions 14 and 17, the data was condensed in order to make the responses more easily understood to the reader. In no other way was the data altered in this Presentation of Findings.

### Demographic Data Questions

Table 4.1 Demographic Data. Question 1.

<b>What is your gender?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Male	37.7%	46
Female	62.3%	76
<i>answered question</i>		<b>122</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

One individual skipped this question. We will see this same occurrence throughout the Demographic Data section and subsequent sections. It is impossible to ascertain the motives or reasons why someone wouldn't answer this question.

Notice the ratio of female to male respondents was almost 2:1. While this ratio seems out of balance, the ratio is roughly the same ratio as those approached to participate in the study. This ratio is reflective of the original master list of prospective participants received from the Office Of Institutional Research.

Table 4.2 Demographic Data. Question 2.

<b>What is your ethnicity?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Caucasian	71.9%	87
African-American	28.1%	34
Hispanic	0.0%	0
Asian	0.0%	0
American-Indian	0.0%	0
Other (please specify)		3
<i>answered question</i>		<b>121</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Response Date</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>11/01/2008 13:14:00</b>	Hispanic
<b>2</b>	<b>11/02/2008 21:16:00</b>	Multi-Racial
<b>3</b>	<b>11/02/2008 22:21:00</b>	(The two questions that follow do not account for PhD. I did not get an EdD. I got a PhD.)

This is the first question that allows for an open-ended response. Notice the row, “Other (please specify)”. Three individuals chose “other” as their ethnicity. Those three responses are provided. One comment of interest is Number 3. This individual’s comment does not speak to this question, but rather the next two questions. As we will see, the following two questions ask about degree(s) obtained. Apparently, this individual obtained a Ph.D. Since that degree was not one of the choices, the opportunity

to comment within this question was the first place this particular respondent could make the point.

Roughly 72% of the respondents were Caucasian, 28% African-American, and less than 1% other (Hispanic and Multi-racial). This data is representative of the ethnic diversity of the student population in the department. I don't believe this data in any way supports a viewpoint that any ethnicities failed to have a voice in the study.

Table 4.3 Demographic Data. Question 3.

<b>What graduate level degree(s) have you obtained from UNG? (Check all that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Masters of School Administration (MSA)	89.3%	109
Masters in an area other than School Administration	5.7%	7
Specialist in Education (Ed.S)	11.5%	14
Doctorate of Education (Ed.D)	13.9%	17
<i>answered question</i>		<b>122</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

Even though these responses represent 147 degrees obtained, it does not represent 147 different people. One hundred twenty two responses represent these 147 degrees. Also, please note the question asks which degrees the participant has *obtained*, not *pursued*. The odds would suggest several of the MSA respondents are pursuing their Ed.S. We can also assume that several of the Ed.S graduates are in the process of pursuing their Ed.D.

This question also allowed us to see whether participants had obtained any other graduate level degrees. For the sake of this study, we are not interested in what those

degrees are. We are only interested in getting a glimpse at whether or not respondents have a broader professional vitae than just educational administration.

This data did not surprise me. Nor do I find anything of significance in this data, other than the fact that more people said they had attained an Ed.D than an Ed.S. This is curious since most Doctorate of Education students at UNCG acquire an Ed.S along the way to their Ed.D. My only hypothesis is that perhaps respondents misinterpreted the question to ask for the highest degree attained, not all of the graduate degrees attained.

Table 4.4 Demographic Data. Question 4.

<b>What year(s) did you graduate?</b>				
<b>Answer Options</b>		<b>Response Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>	
Masters of School Administration (MSA)		2004	113	
Masters in an area other than School Administration		1998	9	
Specialist in Education (Ed.S)		2007	15	
Doctorate of Education (Ed.D)		2004	18	
<i>Answered question</i>			<b>122</b>	
<i>skipped question</i>			<b>1</b>	
<b>Graduation Year(s)</b>	<b>Masters of School Administration (MSA)</b>	<b>Masters in an area other than School Administration</b>	<b>Specialist in Education (Ed.S)</b>	<b>Doctorate of Education (Ed.D)</b>
<b>1987</b>		1		
<b>1990</b>		1		
<b>1991</b>	1			
<b>1993</b>		1		
<b>1997</b>	2			
<b>1998</b>	2	2		1
<b>1999</b>	6			1
<b>2000</b>	6	1		1
<b>2001</b>	8			2
<b>2002</b>	15		1	
<b>2003</b>	18	1		2



<b>2004</b>	7	1	1	2
<b>2005</b>	15	1	2	
<b>2006</b>	9			2
<b>2007</b>	11		5	5
<b>2008</b>	13		6	1
<b>2010</b>				1

In examining the responses from this question, the largest number of MSA graduates completed their degree in 2003, but the numbers remain fairly consistent from 2002 to present.

Judging by the answers to this question, and assuming that the participant sample is representative of the entire UNCG ELC graduate population, it would appear that the ELC program enrollments dramatically picked up in the year 2000 and following. The majority of study participants were students in an ELC program in the new millennium. This information is important because the study was seeking input from graduates about their ISLLC-based education. The ELC Department began using the ISLLC Standards in 1998. If most of our respondents began their graduate education in 2000 or later, that would have given the ELC Department ample time to institute their new Courses of Study. The majority of the answers in this study were based on a set of benchmark standards that had already settled in and were well implemented.

The dispersal and spread of graduation years across the three different programs has rises and falls, but none of this is significant, other than the fact that it was crucial for us to include this question to make sure respondents were not necessarily clustered around a certain time period and shared the exact same experiences, which they did not.

This question shows a good spread of data, representing a good variety of experiences in years and placement within one of the three programs (MSA, Ed.S, Ed.D).

Table 4.5 Demographic Data. Question 5.

<b>Are you currently a practicing school or district level administrator?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	83.6%	102
No	16.4%	20
<i>answered question</i>		<b>122</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

This question is the first time we have a need to split the data into two groups- practicing administrators and those who are not. Table 4.5, above, includes all of the respondents, even those who were not practicing administrators. We mentioned earlier that being a practicing school or district-level administrator was one of the inclusion criteria. This question served as one final opportunity to identify and filter out the responses of any non-administrators. Through conversations with the dissertation chair, we decided to segregate this data, but still examine it within the study. This allowed us one more variable to examine- whether there is a difference in the responses of practicing school administrators from those who are not.

Figure 3.1 in the Methodology chapter described a Data Analysis Spiral that we used as the model to follow for data analysis of this study. One of the premises of that model is the need for the latitude to adapt the methodology in order to follow the data. This is a prime example. Table 4.6, below, will have non-practicing administrators

filtered out. Table 4.7 “administrators” is data of practicing school leaders and “graduates” is data only involving non-practicing administrator graduates.

Table 4.6 Demographic Data. Question 5. Administrators.

<b>Are you currently a practicing school or district level administrator?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	100.0%	102
No	0.0%	0
<i>Answered question</i>		<b>102</b>
<i>Skipped question</i>		<b>0</b>

Table 4.7 Demographic Data. Question 6. Administrators.

<b>What is your job title?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	102
<i>Answered question</i>	<b>102</b>
<i>Skipped question</i>	<b>0</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Assistant Principal	31
Principal	53
Literacy Specialist	2
Instructional Improvement Officer	3
District-level Coordinator	3
Assistant Superintendent	1
Superintendent	1

The first point of interest in this data is that more principals participated in this survey than assistant principals. One reason for a higher principal response rate might be a measure used to locate administrators was a database of administrators provided by DPI. That list was limited only to principals. It did not include assistant principals. As a

non-intentional result, more principals were approached to participate in the study than assistant principals.

The only point of analysis I want to address, related to this question, is that it was necessary to include this question to make sure the data in future questions represented the full range of practicing school administrator roles.

Table 4.8 Demographic Data. Question 6. Graduates.

<b>What is your job title?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	19
<i>answered question</i>	<b>19</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>1</b>
<b>Position</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Teacher	10
Media Coordinator/Specialist	1
Graduation Coach	1
Curriculum Specialist	2
Pastor	1
Assistant Professor	1
Parent Educator	1
Educational Consultant	1
Insurance Agent	1

This data represents non-administrator respondents. One participant skipped this question. It is impossible to know whether he or she is an administrator. For this reason, that individual's responses were grouped with the graduate-only data.

Table 4.9 Demographic Data. Question 7.

<b>What is your school district of employment?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	117

<i>answered question</i>		<b>117</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>6</b>
<b>School District</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	
Alamance-Burlington	4	
Alleghany	1	
Asheboro City	6	
Atlanta, Georgia	1	
Caswell	1	
Catawba	1	
Charlotte-Mecklemberg	2	
Chatam	2	
Cleveland	2	
Davidson	5	
Department of Public Instruction	1	
Durham	1	
Guilford	43	
Horry	1	
Iberville, Louisiana	1	
Lee	1	
Lexington City	1	
Moore	2	
New Hanover	1	
Private School	4	
Randolph	12	
Rockingham	3	
Rowan-Salisbury	3	
Stanly	1	
Stokes	1	
Thomasville	2	
Wake	1	
Whiteville	1	
Winston-Salem/Forsyth	9	
Not Applicable	3	

The first piece of information to notice is the three individuals who responded, “not applicable”. In looking back at Question 6, only three people, including the graduates only, did not work either for a school system or the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction- a pastor, an insurance agent, and a professor.

By far, Guilford County Schools was the most represented school system. The UNCG campus is located in Greensboro, North Carolina, which is in Guilford County. Shortly, we will see in the first question under General Questions that 82 out of 177 respondents cited location or convenience as a “very significant” reason for attending UNCG. My point is that many of the survey participants appear to live within driving distance of UNCG and work for Guilford County Schools. The second largest subgroup of respondents worked in Randolph County. Randolph County borders Guilford County to the south. Randolph County is the employing school system of the student researcher, which may have contributed to a higher response rate from that sub-population.

It might have been interesting to follow certain rabbit trails or tangents that came up periodically within this study. Several questions presented this opportunity. This question is an example. It would have been interesting to see if there were any trends in the way participants answered the survey, depending on their work environment. Unfortunately, following all of these rabbit trails is time and space prohibitive since following every opportunity for curiosity would exponentially increase the scope of this study. One of the pitfalls of this study is all of the potential tangents that could be pursued. While this does create an opportunity for additional work in the future, we must remain on task to answer the research questions and fulfill the purposes at hand.

I was pleased to see that the participants represented both urban and rural areas, small and large districts, and a good range of administrator experiences. This only increased the reliability and trustworthiness of the answers provided in the remainder of the study.

Table 4.10 Demographic Data. Question 8.

<b>How long have you worked in the field of Education?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Less than 5 years	1.6%	2
5-10 years	19.7%	24
10-20 years	49.2%	60
20-30 years	22.1%	27
More than 30 years	7.4%	9
<i>answered question</i>		<b>122</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

Notice the spread of the responses. They almost perfectly represent a classic bell curve.

This is another example of how the demographic questions accomplished their goal of making sure the survey participants were representative of the entire ELC Department graduate population from 1998-2008. The respondents in every way appear to represent not only a good cross-section of the population, but also the full gambit of school leader roles, niches, experiences, and, in this case, years of experience.

Table 4.11 Demographic Data. Question 9.

<b>Have you ever been or are you now a teacher?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	97.5%	117
No	2.5%	3
<i>answered question</i>		<b>120</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>3</b>

I intentionally did not filter the responses from the next eight questions. I wanted to see who had a teaching background, including the non-practicing administrators. The same logic held true when I asked who “was” or “had been” an assistant principal, principal, and district-level administrator. You will notice that 97.5% of respondents had been a teacher. Only 2.5% of respondents had never taught. Quantitative statistics teaches that the bottom and top 2.5% of responses can statistically be considered outliers and thus dismissed. Under this logic, virtually all of the respondents were at one time practicing teachers.

Quite frankly, I was surprised to see that 97.5% of the ELC graduates who participated in this survey had at one time been a teacher. I knew the percentage would be high, but I thought there would be a higher degree of “lateral entry” administrators- individuals who came into educational administration from other management or administrative fields. I also expected to see more theoreticians in administration.

The responses to this question provide a solid glimpse of the face of the educational leadership produced by the UNCG ELC Department. The graduates of the MSA, Ed.S, and Ed.D programs are practitioners, individuals who are by trade, educators, and who are now working their way up into the ranks of educational leadership.

Table 4.12 Demographic Data. Question 10.

If you answered “Yes” to Question 9, how long were you/have you been a teacher?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	117
<i>answered question</i>	<b>117</b>



<i>skipped question</i>		6
Years of Experience	Frequency	
1	2	
3	2	
4	9	
5	14	
6	11	
7	14	
8	14	
9	4	
10	9	
12	3	
13	2	
14	5	
15	5	
16	2	
17	2	
18	2	
19	1	
20	3	
21	2	
22	1	
23	1	
24	1	
25	1	
26	1	
27	1	
28	2	
29	1	
30	2	

Six people skipped this question. That makes sense because three people skipped the previous question and three people answered “no” to ever being a teacher.

Fifty-two percent of those who had been a teacher taught between four and eight years. This data seems to coincide with the requirements of the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program. The North Carolina General Assembly financially sponsors a program that returns practicing teachers to graduate school for administrator preparation. The

Principal Fellows Program has a minimum teaching requirement of four years in order to be eligible for the scholarship program. It is impossible to discern whether there is a connection between this data and the North Carolina Principal Fellows Program without more research and data. The coincidence is curious.

Just as in the last question, I was a bit surprised by the data. I expected to see more career teachers go into administration. Seventy-nine out of 117 respondents to this question, or 68%, had been a teacher for 10 years or less. Fifty-three of the 117, or 45%, had taught for five to eight years. This is another example of an unexpected rabbit trail that could be explored at a later time. What is it about this particular three year period that is so magical about people leaving the classroom to pursue a career in educational leadership?

In these demographic questions, we do not expect to experience a lot of “A-ha moments”; earthshaking revelations in the data. Rather, we are still laying the foundation in understanding who our participants are in order to establish the validity of their feedback for the future sections of the survey.

Table 4.13 Demographic Data. Question 11.

<b>Have you ever been or are you now an assistant principal?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	82.8%	101
No	17.2%	21
<i>answered question</i>		<b>122</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>1</b>

This data is interesting when compared with the number of individuals who attained administrative degrees. One hundred nine people had obtained an MSA degree (Question 3), while only 101 were or had been an assistant principal. We might assume that several of these people never went into administration. But, we should also not rule out that several of these MSA graduates might have gone directly into a principalship or other administrative role.

There is no way within this questioning protocol to tease out this data. The question was designed simply to get a general sense of career paths.

Table 4.14 Demographic Data. Question 12.

If you answered "Yes" to Question 11, how long were you/have you been an assistant principal?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		100
<i>answered question</i>		100
<i>skipped question</i>		23
Years of Experience	Frequency	
1	22	
2	18	
3	25	
4	13	
5	10	
6	7	
7	2	
8	1	
9	2	

I remember hearing when I entered school administration that most assistant principals get a principalship within the first four years. As an assistant principal, I remember peers strategizing about their careers, "If I don't get a principalship within the

first four or five years, I am going to switch school systems in order to better my chances of getting a principalship.” In our case, the data somewhat bears this out. Seventy-five percent of the respondents were assistant principals for four years or less. The number jumps up to 88% for five years or less. This data can be misleading though. The question is not completely inclusive of how many people left the assistant principalship to move up the ladder. Some who left the assistant principalship may have gotten out of administration altogether.

This data reinforces the notion that the assistant principalship is not a terminal career position. People don’t stay in the assistant principalship long. Looking back at this data, I wish the survey protocol would have included a question to determine the number of people who exited administration versus the number of people who moved up the ladder.

Table 4.15 Demographic Data. Question 13.

<b>Have you ever been or are you now a principal?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	56.2%	68
No	43.8%	53
<i>answered question</i>		<b>121</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>

The past several questions were intended to provide some framework about the population that participated in the study and what their professional experience entailed. Of the 121 respondents who answered the question, 68 or 56% have been a principal. Fifty-three or 44% have never been a principal. We know from previous questions that

102 of the respondents are practicing administrators, 101 have been an assistant principal, almost all of them had been a teacher at one time or another, and 19 were not practicing administrators at the time of the study. We also know how long each of the participants were teachers or assistant principals.

The number of people who had experienced the assistant principalship as opposed to the number of people who were principals fell by roughly 30% from 83% to 56%. These numbers make sense, given the graduate years, degrees attained, and years of experience in education. While the demographic data section proves a wide range of respondent demographics, the majority of respondents are relatively new to administration.

Table 4.16 Demographic Data. Question 14.

If you answered "Yes" to Question 13, how long were you/have you been a principal?	
Answer Options	Response Count
	66
<i>answered question</i>	66
<i>skipped question</i>	57
Years of Experience	Frequency
1	6
2	12
3	12
4	11
5	6
6	9
7	2
8	2
9	3
10	1
13	1
14	1

There is a small gap in the data between this question and the previous question. The previous question reports 68 people being a principal. We see that only 66 people answered this question, telling how long they were or have been a principal. Almost two-thirds of the participants were a principal for only four years or less. Literally, less than 5% had been a principal for ten years or longer. This information will be used to support a point shortly.

Table 4.17 Demographic Data. Question 15.

<b>Have you ever been or are you now a district level administrator?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	16.5%	20
No	83.5%	101
<i>answered question</i>		<b>121</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>

Just over 15% of respondents have worked at the district level. This follows the trend we might expect- 97.5% have been a teacher, 83% have been an assistant principal, 56% have been a principal, and now we see that 16% have worked at the district level.

Table 4.18 Demographic Data. Question 16.

<b>If you answered "Yes" to Question 15, how long were you/have you been a district level administrator?</b>	
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
	23
<i>answered question</i>	<b>23</b>
<i>skipped question</i>	<b>100</b>
<b>Years of Experience</b>	<b>Frequency</b>

1	5
2	4
3	6
4	6
5	1
6	1

The lengths of tenure for district level administrators are relatively short. Twenty-one of the twenty-three respondents, or 91%, had worked at the district level for four years or less. Of the 23 respondents, no one had worked at the district level longer than six years. This data can be interpreted one of two ways. The first interpretation is that people do not stay at the district level long. The second interpretation would approach the issue from an opposite direction. This logic would suggest the reason we see such short tenures at the district level is not because people do not stay at the district level long, but rather that these individuals are still early in their tenure. We must remember this study used individuals who graduated from one of three ELC programs within the past ten years. Perhaps the reason the tenures at the district level are so short is that this study caught these individuals when they were still early in their career trajectories.

When I look at this though, I see something else. We can look at the data from this question and, also from the previous questions, see a phenomenon of turnover in education. Not only are there not a lot of long tenured district-level administrators, but there also are not a lot of long tenured principals or assistant principals. The human capital within education leadership appears to be turning over at an alarming rate. We

must remember that this study did not solely approach new budding administrators, but also Ed.S and doctoral level graduates, individuals who should be well into their careers.

It strikes me that if I was able to gather this alarming information in such a small-scale study, what must this data look like on a national scale? Public education as a profession needs to do something to increase the reputation and attraction and retention of people to the education leadership field. It amazes me that our federal, state and local governments expect ever-increasing productivity and results from public education, yet very little is done by these entities to increase the attraction and retention of quality people to the education leadership field.

Table 4.19 Demographic Data. Question 17.

<b>Have you ever held or do you now hold any other position in a school district?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	26.4%	32
No	73.6%	89
If so, please name position(s).		32
<i>answered question</i>		<b>121</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>2</b>
<b>If so, please name position(s).</b>		
coach, curriculum facilitator, school counselor, preschool coordinator, librarian, teacher assistant, tutor, bus driver, observer/evaluator, behavior management specialist		

Question 17 was included in the survey to give some perspective on career paths. Twenty-six percent of respondents had held a position within a school, other than teacher, assistant principal, principal, or district-level administrator. The list above is representative of a good cross-section of the existing roles within a school- classified and certified positions, direct instruction positions and support roles. I believe this data



speaks to the fact that school and district level leaders have the same career paths as everyone else in the school system. They work their way up through the ranks. School leaders are familiar with the various roles in a school.

We already know that almost all of the participants had at one time been a teacher. We also know how many were assistant principals, principals, and district administrators. Now we see the remainder of the professional experience of the respondents. Virtually every other role in a school was represented. Administrators have, in large part, worked their way up the ladder. Who better to lead a school or a school district than the individuals who have worked in a wide range of education positions.

### General Questions

Table 4.20 General Questions. Question 1.

<b>Rate the following reasons as to why you picked UNCG for your graduate education.</b>				
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>No significance</b>	<b>little/some significance</b>	<b>Significant</b>	<b>very significant</b>
Location/convenience	2	7	25	82
Rigor	6	22	63	24
reputation of the program	6	7	58	45
cost effectiveness	7	24	41	42
Other	7	2	4	18
Please describe "other"				24
<i>answered question</i>				<b>117</b>
<i>skipped question</i>				<b>6</b>
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>			
<b>Guilford County Schools cohort/paid by GCS</b>	12			
<b>Reputation of the faculty</b>	3			
<b>flexibility in scheduling</b>	2			
<b>Knew several other people; we</b>	1			

<b>went as a group</b>	
<b>Participated in NC Principal Fellows Program</b>	1
<b>Diverse experience</b>	1
<b>The school offered the program I wanted</b>	1
<b>Statement of Commitments</b>	1
<b>Recommended by friend</b>	1
<b>Philosophies aligned with my own</b>	1

This data can be viewed at least two different ways. First, the information allows us to rank the reasons why people chose to attend UNCG. Second, it allows us to see the significance or degree of importance for each reason. If we look at which choices the respondent answered as “significant” or “very significant”, location or convenience would be first, followed by “reputation of the program” and “rigor”. Cost effectiveness was less significant. The open-ended responses are also worth examining. Those who provided additional responses feel those open-ended responses were “very significant” in impacting their decision to attend UNCG. Of the open-ended responses, the most common reason for choosing UNCG, four to one, was because individuals were part of the Guilford County Schools cohort, which paid for their graduate schooling.

At this point, all of the survey respondents including the non-administrators have been included back in the data. These questions are pertinent for everyone who graduated from one of the three programs.

Clearly, people chose UNCG primarily because of its location and out of convenience. But, it appears that the respondents felt they got these other things as well- rigor, good reputation of the program, and cost effectiveness. Here in central North Carolina, we are in a very interesting situation. There is an abundance of choices for

prospective graduate students from which to make their selections. This question shows us that location and convenience was a primary factor, but students wouldn't have come to the UNCG ELC Department if the other components were not in place. Students could have attended a number of other schools and still had the location and convenience.

Table 4.21 General Questions. Question 2.

In your opinion, how respected is the UNCG ELC program in relation to other programs in the area?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not respected	0.8%	1
As respected	19.5%	23
More respected	27.1%	32
Highly respected	52.5%	62
Comments:		14
<b>answered question</b>		<b>118</b>
<b>skipped question</b>		<b>5</b>
Number	Comments:	
1	Of the administrators I work with, the most successful and innovative are graduates of UNCG.	
2	I recommend it to everyone who mentions he/she is interested in obtaining an MSA degree.	
3	UNCG School of Education has a very strong reputation in the state.	
4	Highly respected program and does a very good job of preparing you for the profession.	
5	The respect held by colleagues in our school district was a deciding factor.	
6	Ten years ago, highly respected. Now, less so.	
7	I found little difference between programs, the completion of a program was the important matter.	
8	Very well known and respected for human relations and cultural awareness.	
9	Outstanding program - I felt very prepared for my first principalship.	
10	Chapel Hill is Chapel Hill, but as far as quality around what it takes to be an effective administrator, UNC-G blows it away.	
11	People are aware of UNCG nationally and it is often ranked among the top ELC programs by US News.	
12	UNCG's School of Education program is ranked in the top 30 programs in the nation.	
13	While at UNCG I was very impressed with the quality of professional staff and course selections.	
14	There are too many racial issues yet to be resolved. Far too much favoritism for target ethnicities.	

The responses to this question were favorable. Only one respondent out of 118, or .008% felt UNCG is “not respected” in relation to other programs in the area. In fact, twice as many respondents gave UNCG the highest rating of “highly respected”, compared with any other category. Several critical comments were made. Those comments were balanced out by positive comments.

Eighty percent of the participants believe the UNCG ELC program is more respected than other programs in the area. Of the 14 comments, 11 were positive, two were negative, and one was neutral. The respondents to the survey clearly feel the UNCG ELC program is a respectable program. Comment 14 was a negative comment about racial issues. The respondent feels there is, “favoritism for target ethnicities”. This is an interesting comment since many of the comments throughout the study have applauded the department for their stance and approach to diversity and cultural issues.

Table 4.22 General Questions. Question 3.

<b>In your opinion, how rigorous was the ELC program?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
No rigor	2.5%	3
Rigorous	69.5%	82
Highly rigorous	28.0%	33
Comments:		12
<i>answered question</i>		<b>118</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>5</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>1</b>	It challenged my thinking, however it did not appear as time-consuming as other Masters programs my colleagues have experienced. I did attend as a full time student however.	
<b>2</b>	It really depended on the class - some were much more rigorous than others.	
<b>3</b>	The rigor was defined by the course. Overall, I believe the program was not challenging, but individual courses and instructors proved very rigorous.	
<b>4</b>	The level of required research and resulting products are demanding.	

<b>5</b>	Most complaints involve the program being more reflective than research-based and the classes were steeped with conversations that did not deal directly with the readings, mainly peoples' opinions, and did not prepare students for the role of an administrator.
<b>6</b>	Written comprehensive tests were added after my cohort, adding strength to the program, I feel.
<b>7</b>	it has to be rigorous to keep up the standards.
<b>8</b>	The rigor/relevance varied according to the whims of the professors.
<b>9</b>	Writing intensive courses and school law were especially challenging for both degrees, but very, very essential.
<b>10</b>	Some courses were more rigorous than others...
<b>11</b>	Coursework needs to be more rigorous and specific to real life.
<b>12</b>	My MSA program was filled with adjunct professors...some good, some not so good. My Ed.S./Ed.D. program has been much more rigorous and feels more joined since there is less turnover.

Approximately 70% of respondents described their preparation as “rigorous”. Almost 30% felt their preparation was “highly rigorous”. Only three respondents out of 118 or 2.5% reported their preparation as, “no rigor”. This information is interesting in the context of the last question. Participants felt the UNCG ELC Department is “highly respected”. At the same time, those individuals don’t think the program is as rigorous as it could be. The voluntary comments give us a bit more understanding of the situation. The majority of the comments spoke to the notion that some professors were highly rigorous and maintained high expectations while others were less demanding. I believe it was hard for respondents to cast a wide net over the whole department, because their experience was different with different professors.

These answers are relative. A baseline or reference point was not established to help provide perspective, “rigorous compared to what?” Even in the absence of a reference point, respondents feel the program qualified as rigorous. When I first looked at this data I thought, “Okay. Only three people did not believe it was rigorous. So,

overwhelmingly the sense of the sample population is that it was a rigorous program. Now, let's look at the other two categories- rigorous versus highly rigorous. Most individuals responded that the program was rigorous instead of highly rigorous." My mind then proceeded to seek an answer to the question of why people felt it was just rigorous and not highly rigorous. I realized a designation of highly rigorous may not necessarily be the most important thing in this equation. It might be possible to have an extremely rigorous program with very little meat. Perhaps a better question for us to ask as we examine this data is, "Did the graduates acquire the knowledge and skills they needed during their preparation?" and, "Are graduates being successful and innovative in the field?" I believe the answer to both of those questions is "yes", and we can see evidence of that in the data throughout this study.

The second point that needs to be mentioned was alluded to in the previous chapter. The comments to this question remind us that rigor varied throughout the program. Some professors were very rigorous while others were not. Perhaps one of the most practical solutions to this issue would be more departmental collaboration and oversight of the classes in the area of expectations to ensure the consistency of those expectations across the department.

Table 4.23 General Questions. Question 4.

<b>The amount of balance in the Course of Study between theory and practice (in percents) was:</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Average</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
% theory/philosophy	57	115
% practice/pragmatic information	43	115
<i>answered question</i>		<b>115</b>

<i>skipped question</i>		8
%theory vs. % practice	Frequency	
90/10	4	
85/15	5	
80/20	10	
75/25	8	
70/30	10	
65/35	4	
60/40	23	
50/50	15	
45/55	2	
40/60	20	
35/65	4	
30/70	3	
25/75	2	
20/80	4	
15/85	1	

You may remember this question was added to the protocol based on a trend that developed in the interviews. Interviewees independently kept echoing an inappropriate balance between theory and practice. The responses from this question averaged 57% theory and 43% practice. In attempting to understand whether the respondents feel this is appropriate, we must examine responses from the next two questions.

During data collection, several participants experienced a technical problem when trying to fill in these fields in the survey. The answer fields were set up so a combination of the two answers had to total 100%. Three participants reported not being able to fill in the fields to this question. I was not able to solve the problem for these three participants. I asked the three participants to skip this question.

When the responses were averaged from this question, participants felt the balance was currently 60% theory and 40% practice. This surprised me because the

participants from the interview phase of research unanimously felt the balance of praxis was out of whack. The following two questions will yield more information.

Table 4.24 General Questions. Question 5.

<b>Was this an appropriate balance?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Yes	61.0%	72
No	39.0%	46
<i>answered question</i>		<b>118</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>5</b>

The majority of the respondents felt the current balance is an appropriate balance. We must keep in mind though, 51 of the 118 respondents stated the balance was currently already at 50/50 or more, with an emphasis on practice over theory.

The majority of participants felt the current balance was appropriate. We discussed in the last chapter that this information is somewhat misleading since a large number of people, when they answered that the current balance was appropriate, cited different proportions than the average from the last question. This cluster of questions about praxis is proof that data from a larger sample size often tells a different story than a researcher may think they are getting from one or two, or even four interviewees, as in our case.

There is value though in both sets of data. It all comes together to paint the same picture. When we look at each set of data in isolation, it seems to be contradictory. But it isn't. It is simply a phenomenon of different voices narrating different parts of the same story. The results of the next question are a perfect example.



Table 4.25 General Questions. Question 6.

If you answered "No" to Question 5, what would be a more appropriate balance?		
Answer Options	Response Average	Response Count
% theory/philosophy	42	45
% practice/pragmatic information	58	45
<i>answered question</i>		<b>45</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>78</b>
% Theory vs. Practice	Frequency	
<b>65/35</b>	1	
<b>60/40</b>	3	
<b>50/50</b>	13	
<b>45/55</b>	1	
<b>40/60</b>	16	
<b>35/65</b>	1	
<b>30/70</b>	8	
<b>27/75</b>	2	

The answer choice with the highest frequency was 40% theory and 60% practice. One in three participants believe this would be the most appropriate balance. Thirteen out of 45 respondents believed a balance of 50/50 would be most appropriate. Sixty-four percent of participants believe a balance of 50/50 or 40/60 would be most appropriate.

Those that felt there was an inappropriate balance of theory and practice in the department's curriculum explained in this question that a balance of 40% theory and 60% practice would be more appropriate. These are the same proportions suggested by the interviewees in the first phase of research.

Regardless of what people believe the current proportions are, people agree that a balance of 40% theory and 60% practice is most appropriate. Additionally, the survey participants provided examples in other open-ended questions as to what constitutes

practical instruction- case scenarios, internships, practicums, face time with practicing administrators, real-life application activities, budget issues, personnel issues, and others.

Table 4.26 General Questions. Question 7.

How well did the UNCG ELC program prepare you for school administration?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Not well	1.8%	2
Adequately	45.6%	52
Very well	52.6%	60
comments:		23
<i>answered question</i>		<b>114</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>9</b>
Number	comments:	
1	The leadership of Dr. Lashley was tantamount to the success of the program.	
2	It is difficult to simulate in classes all of the situations that you face as an administrator.	
3	I responded adequately, because some dimensions of school leadership will only be taught through experience. I believe UNCG provided all the knowledge needed for one to be prepared on a theoretical side.	
4	I also attribute my solid preparation to participation in the NC Principal Fellows Program.	
5	There is no preparation other than jumping in with both feet.	
6	The preparation issues are related more to the expectations of each school district versus what is taught at the university level.	
7	UNCG did an excellent job preparing me to be a school administrator in North Carolina.	
8	Some things you have to experience to learn.	
9	There were still noticeable gaps in the program: EC, budget/finance, and HR.	
10	There needs to be more practitioners in ed. leadership to teach core courses. The link between practice and theory is weakest when the professor has not been a school leader.	
11	The best experience was during the internship where I was supervised as an administrator.	
12	Should have had at least one course on central office administration, including the superintendency, including organization, types of responsibilities, additional legal issues and more on global education.	
13	no comment	
14	Not enough real AP work (buses, books, buildings, etc...), however it did a great job preparing us "legally". I've always felt comfortable when it came to knowing the law.	

15	Some help with school budgeting would have been great. We had a guest speaker principal come and talk to our class, one time.
16	The two prior questions are biased. I choose that balance with Shapiro/Purple/Brubaker b/c that is what I believe is important - the cultural, moral, philosophical foundation - not who assigns textbooks.
17	I have not served as a school administrator, but I feel that I was adequately prepared if the opportunity presented itself.
18	I felt prepared on the first day as an assistant principal. Same as when I became a superintendent.
19	I felt very prepared for the MSA-exam; it would have been great to have a course focused on 'School Budget/Finance' for all three levels. A course focused on identifying State level resources to minimize 'blind spots' as a school principal.
20	More real life, actual situations need to be discussed and studied.
21	I learned a tremendous amount re: being an effective leader from Dr. Ron Williamson. Unfortunately, he's no longer at UNCG.
22	I was already in administration and the program reinforced my practice.
23	I have not learned anything about managing a school budget, grants, etc.

The answers to this question were complimentary of the program. Most respondents gave their preparation program the highest rating. Only two individuals out of 114 answered the program did not prepare them.

Twenty-three individuals made comments. Several of the comments gave more information as to why individuals scored the preparation as “adequate” or “not well”. One comment sums up this point, “I responded adequately, because some dimensions of school leadership will only be taught through experience. I believe UNCG provided all the knowledge needed for one to be prepared on a theoretical side.”

The majority of the comments fell under one of three tangents on the same theme, experience. The first tangent to emerge was that UNCG did a good job, but there is no substitute for experience. The second tangent came from participants who indicated they needed more practical experiences built into their preparation. One commenter stated, There needs to be more practitioners in ed. leadership to teach core courses. The link

between practice and theory is weakest when the professor has not been a school leader.”

The third tangent involved people giving examples of areas in which they needed more exposure or experience- managing a budget, grants, personnel issues, Exceptional Children, and others.

I was going to segregate the graduate-only data from this and future questions that call on administrative experience, but those individuals voluntarily excused themselves from these questions, eliminating the need to segregate the data.

Like the last question, this question was relative. How does one define what it means to be prepared? Each individual’s definition of preparedness is different. Is it possible to receive training that truly makes a person prepared for everything that might be encountered in school administration? Some of the open-ended responses alluded to this dilemma. Just because these hiccups exist doesn’t mean we should not investigate and seek answers in these areas.

Over 98% of participants felt their preparation was somewhere between “adequate” and “very well”. My point is that it does not appear we are looking at a dysfunctional and broken educational leadership department. Graduates view the program as successful and are quite complimentary of their experience. At the same time, this is a great opportunity for the department to glean even a few pieces of feedback from the graduates, as the department proceeds forward in assimilating a new set of benchmark standards.

What is interesting is that, for the most part, respondents don’t appear to have an axe to grind. As I analyze this data, I cannot find a hidden agenda. All I see is graduates

who think very highly of the ELC Department and seem to genuinely care about the success of the program. What great conditions from which to gather feedback.

Table 4.27 General Questions. Question 8.

<b>Please check any practical areas you wish would have been addressed in more depth. (Check all that apply)</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
budget/finance	77.7%	87
Action Plans	42.0%	47
personnel observations/evaluations	35.7%	40
management or operational issues	33.9%	38
Other (please specify)	25.0%	28
<i>answered question</i>		<b>112</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>11</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Other (please specify)</b>	
<b>1</b>	I might have checked all of the above, however I took a new class by Dr. Williams that addressed those issues.	
<b>2</b>	Personnel Issues	
<b>3</b>	people issues; resolving conflict	
<b>4</b>	How to make change easier for adults.	
<b>5</b>	School Law	
<b>6</b>	A focus on national issues affecting administrators would have been beneficial. (i.e. NC doesn't have a strong teacher union whereas other states do and administrators in those states would need to have additional training to fully understand their power and influence)	
<b>7</b>	I was very well prepared in these areas. However, I question the education that more recent graduates are receiving.	
<b>8</b>	Local Politics in Education	
<b>9</b>	Dealing more with the "people issues"- dealing with all stakeholders and problems each bring/have	
<b>10</b>	Exceptional Children Law and Practice	
<b>11</b>	The influence of district policies/politics on the effectiveness of school administrators	
<b>12</b>	Time management, day to day operations and actual processes of how to work with parents and the community. State Management systems such as HRMS, Value Added Data would have been most helpful.	
<b>13</b>	The budget/finance course I had taught by the finance officer of Winston-Salem/Forsyth Schools was outstanding. A course on action plans was taught, but I was unable to work it into my schedule.	
<b>14</b>	Buses...get an AP or Transportation director to teach the ins and outs of how to be in charge of buses...	
<b>15</b>	Not how to fire drill but real operational issues . . . homelessness, addicted parents, etc. what to do about issues that have to be resolved/addressed before instruction can occur.	

16	Again, I created the program and courses I wanted - I think I came through at the perfect time because there seemed to be more of those type folks there.
17	Personnel Management
18	leadership of school community
19	The issue of formative assessment and fair grading practice was not covered. School administrators need to be able to address this issue.
20	I think the EC course offered by Dr. Lashley should be a required course. Honestly, there should be more than one EC course. Also, I think students would benefit from having a staff member as an administrative supervisor. Dawn Wooten had a great deal of practicality to offer, but she also had her own agenda... A required curriculum course would be beneficial.
21	Politics
22	Curriculum
23	Emerging technologies as they pertain to teaching and learning
24	Student Discipline
25	Issues regarding social justice and ways educational leaders can have a positive influence upon improving democratic educational practices.
26	Building teacher leadership capacity
27	Working with difficult students and teachers, running meetings, organizing & time management
28	Interviewing tidbits to help obtain an AP position

The responses from this question accomplished at least two things. First, it provided a prioritized list of the choices given. These answer options came from responses in the interview phase of research. The second thing this question accomplished was that it extended an opportunity for respondents to discuss any other areas they thought should have been better addressed with their preparation program. The most prevalent answer was, “budget/finance”. Some of the answers included personnel, law, politics, day-to-day operations, and instructional leadership.

Of the choices provided, most participants felt the area of budget and finance needs to be addressed more. Personnel issues were another common response. I certainly do not claim to know the reasons why a budget course is not required in the Masters program, but 77% of respondents indicated the need for more preparation in this

area. There is a course offered as part of the Ed.S Course of Study, but the MSA program is the largest program in the department and many of the MSA graduates will not return for their Ed.S or Ed.D. If they do not get budget training in their MSA, they will never get it.

### ISLLC Standards Questions

Table 4.28 The ISLLC Standards. Question 1.

How often does your job require activities related to the following standards?						
Answer Options	Almost never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Response Count
Standard 1- Vision	2	8	12	28	60	110
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	1	1	3	10	95	110
Standard 3- Operations	4	0	5	12	87	108
Standard 4- Communities	0	2	13	38	57	110
Standard 5- Ethics	1	0	3	4	102	110
Standard 6- The Larger Context	1	6	18	29	56	110
Comments						9
<i>answered question</i>						110
<i>skipped question</i>						13
Number	Comments					
1	I based my answers on my time as an assistant principal since I am not currently in an administrative role.					
2	Each of these have to be dealt with on a daily basis in one aspect or another.					
3	Looking at individual standards is difficult, they are entwined with daily responsibilities and duties.					
4	As I am currently retired, I am unable to answer these questions.					
5	I sell insurance					
6	A school cannot operate effectively if all of the standards are not practiced on a consistent basis.					
7	I do not think you can separate these into separate entities. Your values drive the decisions you make and they are all like the pebble in the pond.					
8	Although I am not an intern, I have daily opportunities to apply what I know and believe regarding the other standards to my daily practice.					
9	As superintendent I practice all of these areas daily.					

The data within this chart can be read several different ways. The question was designed to be read by examining each standard independently, tallying which category received the most responses for each standard. Most respondents said they use each of the six standards on a daily basis in their work. Looking deeper into the data though, numerous participants said “vision”, “communities”, and “the larger context” were areas they engage in on a weekly basis. Some of the comments to this question made the point that all of these standards are intertwined and inter-related in the workplace. Therefore, it is difficult to rate each standard independently.

Up to this point, survey questions focused on gathering demographic data to form an understanding of the work experiences of participants. The questions also gathered general feedback about the perceptions of participants regarding their experiences as a student and now practicing school leader.

The next set of questions focus on the ISLLC Standards in terms of seeking to understand how participants felt the ELC Department prepared them in each of the standards.

I think there is some useable information pertaining to this particular question. The first thing I notice is that the participants view this set of standards as relevant and pertinent to their work. The majority of respondents use all of these standards on a daily basis. We will see this reinforced in the next question which is a follow-up question to this one.



Second, I do notice a spread in the data. It is subtle, but it is present. This spread in data tells a story. A significant minority of the respondents, almost four in ten, said they only engage in Standard 4- Communities on a weekly basis. Almost three in ten said the same thing of Standard 1- Vision and Standard 6- The Larger Context. From this information it is reasonable for us to make the statement that Standard 4- Communities is the least applied standard, followed by Standard 6- The Larger Context and Standard 1- Vision.

We can use this same logic to determine the most applied or frequently used standards as well. Across the board, Standard 5- Ethics is the most frequently used standard, followed by Standard 2- Learning and Teaching, and Standard 3- Operations.

Following is a rank order based on this data, from the most to least used:

1. Standard 5- Ethics
2. Standard 2- Learning and Teaching
3. Standard 3- Operations
4. Standard 1- Vision
5. Standard 6- The Larger Context
6. Standard 4- Communities

This information is important because it allows us to reflect on whether the curriculum within the department accurately meets the demands of the workplace. An example is Standard 3- Operations. We already know from the Presentation of Findings that respondents feel this is an under-represented area of the curriculum. Yet, on this list of how often the standards are used, Standard 3- Operations is used more often than several of the other standards, according to the respondents of this survey.

Table 4.29 The ISLLC Standards. Question 2.

<b>How important or relevant are the following standards to your success as an administrator?</b>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>No importance</b>	<b>Little importance</b>	<b>Some importance</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Standard 1- Vision	0	0	2	13	94	109
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	0	0	0	5	104	109
Standard 3- Operations	1	1	3	25	79	109
Standard 4- Communities	0	0	2	19	87	108
Standard 5- Ethics	0	0	0	6	103	109
Standard 6- The Larger Context	0	0	6	26	75	107
Comments:						3
answered question						109
skipped question						14
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments:</b>					
1	Operations are of less importance than I thought they would be as a student. Vision and teaching/learning are by far the most important.					
2	As I am currently retired, I am unable to answer these questions.					
3	I am not an administrator so I did not respond					

In this question like the last, the majority of respondents answered that each of the six standards was “very important” to their success as administrators. At first glance it might seem this question was not profitable, yielding little useable information. I disagree. The information from these responses tells a story. First, we learn participants feel Standard 2- Teaching and Learning followed by Standard 5- Ethics are the most relevant or important to their success. Administrators view Standard 3- Operations and Standard 6- The Larger Context as less important for administrator success. This

information is interesting since Standard 3- Operations was the primary standard that interview participants felt was under-represented in their preparation. As we will see in the next question, there is an opportunity for tension between the standards that administrators view as important and the standards stressed by the school district.

This question gives us an opportunity to dig deeper into the conversation from the previous question. Not only do we have data on how often each of the standards are used, but we also have data on how important these practitioners believe each of the standards are to their work. We cannot assume, without examining the data, that the rank ordering is the same. For example, we know that participants did not exercise Standard 1- Vision as often as some of the other standards. But, we know that visioning and strategic planning is conducted several times during the year, not as often as say, the need for ethics, yet I assume it is one of the most crucial and vital practices within a school. The data from this question gives us the other half of that equation, allowing us to put the whole issue in perspective.

What we see is that far fewer participants used the bottom three category choices. Almost all of the respondents said all six of the ISLLC Standards were either “important” or “very important” to their success as an administrator. There is still enough separation or stratification in the data that we can draw conclusions. The data tells us that Standard 2- Learning and Teaching and Standard 5- Ethics are the most important, followed by Standard 1- Vision, Standard 4- Communities, Standard 3- Operations, and Standard 6- The Larger Context. I wonder if people rated Standard 6- The Larger Context last

because they feel it is somewhat ambiguous or for more legitimate reasons? The rank order from most to least important is:

- 1 & 2. Standard 2- Learning and Teaching, Standard 5- Ethics
3. Standard 1- Vision
4. Standard 4- Communities
5. Standard 3- Operations
6. Standard 6- The Larger Context

There appears to be a discrepancy between how often each standard is used and the importance of that standard to the success of the administrator. It is left up to the professors of education leadership to decide the appropriate weight of each standard in the MSA, Ed.S and Ed.D Courses of Study.

Table 4.30 The ISLLC Standards. Question 3.

To what degree are the following standards stressed in your school district?						
Answer Options	No importance	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Very important	Response Count
Standard 1- Vision	2	3	13	24	68	110
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	0	1	2	20	87	110
Standard 3- Operations	0	1	20	49	40	110
Standard 4- Communities	0	4	14	39	53	110
Standard 5- Ethics	1	4	16	31	58	110
Standard 6- The Larger Context	2	6	21	45	35	109
Comments:						6
answered question						110
skipped question						13
Number	Comments:					
1	I think that these characteristics may be stressed differently in less urban school districts.					
2	Ethics for teachers and APs is very important as to how they are evaluated, Principals and other district personnel seem to operate at a different level of ethics, for which they are not held accountable.					
3	As I am currently retired, I am unable to answer these questions.					

4	I am working to make standards 3,4, and 6 more a part of our daily practice here in Whiteville.
5	Tests drive it all
6	Testing is the main thing stressed, more so than teaching or learning

With this question, we begin to see the data spread out into distinct categories. As stressed by the school district, respondents viewed Standard 1- Vision and Standard 2- Learning and Teaching as “very important”. It is interesting that Standard 3- Operations and Standard 6- The Larger Context are viewed as the standards stressed the least on a district-wide level. In the first phase of research, the interviewees identified Standard 3- Operations as the standard most under-represented in their preparation. According to the data received in response to this question, The ELC Department might be right on track. Clearly, survey respondents see Standard 3- Operations as the least stressed by their employing school systems as well as the standard with the least amount of importance or relevance to their success (Question 2). Another area of interest was found in the comments. Two individuals mentioned that their district(s) stress testing over everything else. I took that to mean all of our talk and discourse about these standards is futile. In the end, these administrators feel the educational system is reduced to one central focus--testing.

This question is not quite as crucial as the last two, but it does serve a purpose. It allows us to see the signals school systems send about the prioritization of the standards, compared with how we know the participants rank the standards. At the school district level, Standard 2- Learning and Teaching is clearly presented as the most important (as perceived by our survey participants). Standard 1- Vision would be second, followed by

Standard 5- Ethics, then Standard 4- Communities, Standard 3- Operations, and the Larger Context in last place. The rank order for how people perceive the priority of standards follows:

1. Standard 2- Learning and Teaching
2. Standard 1- Vision
3. Standard 5- Ethics
4. Standard 4- Communities
5. Standard 3- Operations
6. Standard 6- The Larger Context

Comparing this rank order with the rank ordering offered by the respondents, we see some noticeable differences. Vision moved up the list and ethics fell. Though there weren't many comments, I notice a point of interest. One of the comments reads, "Ethics for teachers and AP's is very important as to how they are evaluated. Principals and other district personnel seem to operate at a different level of ethics, for which they are not held accountable." I would assume this respondent is not a principal or district-level administrator. So, this person is probably an AP or one of the handful of respondents not practicing school leadership. This comment uncovers something troubling, when held up to the data from this question. Ethics fell in the list of priorities at the district level.

Well, many of these respondents were principals and district-level officials. This commenter has some ethical concerns about his or her superiors. It seems from this data that many others (which includes principals and district level leaders) share the same concerns about their superiors. This data is quite concerning. For ethics to fall in the ranking, there must be something underneath the surface. If I had conducted this research solely as interviews, we might have been able to ask follow up questions to tease out the issue. But, if we had used interviews as the sole instrument, the data set would have been

much smaller and would we even have seen these same results? Also, the veil of anonymity would be gone, which might have prevented individuals from speaking openly about this issue.

Table 4.31 The ISLLC Standards. Question 4.

How well did the UNCG ELC Department prepare you in each of the following standards?					
Answer Options	No preparation	Poor preparation	Sufficient preparation	Great preparation	Response Count
Standard 1- Vision	0	3	49	60	
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	2	7	57	46	112
Standard 3- Operations	2	21	67	22	112
Standard 4- Communities	2	9	65	36	112
Standard 5- Ethics	0	3	36	73	112
Standard 6- The Larger Context	0	7	60	44	111
Comments:					6
<i>answered question</i>					<b>112</b>
<i>skipped question</i>					<b>11</b>
Number	Comments:				
1	I think UNCG professors stress vision tremendously, which may be one of the more important components to sustaining principals and supporting their longevity in the career.				
2	I don't believe the school can educate you on how to do these- we learned to write a vision but not how to get our staff to adopt that vision as their own. We did not discuss how to build community support and increase our volunteer base, nor how to get parents more involved in the learning of their children. Ethics are ingrained and cannot be changed from education.				
3	Even with the internship, it is difficult to prepare principals for the scope and breadth of the position, especially with the changes from NCLB.				
4	I don't think the preparation was truly poor for operations; however, on certain days it wasn't sufficient. I am thankful I have some common sense about certain things. Honestly, I am not sure how to go about better preparing for the "nuts and bolts" part of this job--every district is different and every day is different.				
5	Based on Praxis results.				
6	Again, the lower two were a choice. I wanted to explore my own passion - you can read about distributing textbooks and feeding children, but what is your				

value system around educating ALL children even those who do not look like you or come to school to learn.

The answers to this question provided rich data. Respondents answered that the UNCG ELC Department gave them “great preparation” in the areas of Standard 1- Vision and Standard 5- Ethics. Respondents felt they experienced “sufficient preparation” in all other categories. There are a couple of additional pieces of data in this chart that catch our attention. Twenty-one individuals, more than two times as much as any other standard, felt their preparation in Standard 3- Operations could be classified as “poor”. This may seem contradictory to the discussion in the last question, but as we look further into the data, we see more. Roughly the same number of people who classified their preparation in Standard 3 as “poor”, also categorized the preparation in this area as “great”. Regardless of how we choose to interpret this information, we can describe Standard 3- Operations as the lowest standard, in terms of preparation. I do not think we can use the word “poorest”, but certainly “lowest”. One last piece of information in regards to this question are the small numbers in several categories indicating “no preparation” or “poor preparation”. We should not qualitatively dismiss this data because there is surely a story behind each of these answers, but quantitatively these responses are insignificant, representing only .027% and .018%, respectively.

The comments section yields some interesting information. Apparently Commenter Number Six was one of the outlier answers to this question. His or her comments give us a piece of that qualitative story I mentioned. It seems this individual wanted more training in the philosophical and intangibles, rather than the pragmatic. We



know from the previous questions about practice versus theory that this individual represents a minority opinion.

This question continued the theme, attempting to understand how the ELC Department fared in its preparation of graduates according to these standards. This question left little room for interpretation or spin theory. This question and the next, cut straight to the heart of the matter. The responses to this question were discussed in depth in the last chapter. I will only make a couple of observations. First, notice that Standard 5- Ethics followed by Standard 1- Vision were ranked the highest in terms of preparation. Second, notice that Operations was ranked the lowest. Remember back in Question 1 of this cluster of ISLLC questions that respondents indicated they use Standard 3- Operations the third most frequently of all the standards. This area may be in need of more representation within the program. A ranking in terms of preparation from best to least follows.

1. Standard 5- Ethics
2. Standard 1- Vision
- 3 & 4. Standard 2- Learning and Teaching, Standard 6- The Larger Context
5. Standard 4- Communities
6. Standard 3- Operations

Table 4.32 The ISLLC Standards. Question 5.

Please rank each of the six standards in terms of how well they were addressed in your preparation program at UNCG.							
Answer Options	Best	2nd best	3rd best	3rd worst	2nd worst	Worst	Response Count
Standard 1- Vision	38	34	16	9	7	4	108
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	19	15	29	21	15	10	109
Standard 3- Operations	2	5	12	19	20	45	103

Standard 4- Communities	5	12	20	29	30	11	107
Standard 5- Ethics	32	30	25	9	6	7	109
Standard 6- The Larger Context	15	15	8	16	25	26	105
Comments:							11
<i>answered question</i>							111
<i>skipped question</i>							12
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments:</b>						
<b>1</b>	This question is difficult to answer in that there was no "worst" for me.						
<b>2</b>	There was great effort to cover the legal aspects of the principalship, but not the ethical responsibilities.						
<b>3</b>	All standards were addressed appropriately. None of them should be labeled any form of "worst."						
<b>4</b>	No real practice is provided in teaching and learning and in operational systems and practice.						
<b>5</b>	There really is no best or worst, there was balance within the 6 standards and all were taken seriously.						
<b>6</b>	This was very hard to do . . . there was no "worst."						
<b>7</b>	Don't like the wording of the scale here. There was no "worst." All prep was excellent.						
<b>8</b>	Don't like this question. Probably teaching and learning should have been better addressed as well as operations.						
<b>9</b>	I believe that they were all taught equally so I found it very difficult to rank them in number of how they prepared me.						
<b>10</b>	Do not like the use of the word "worst".						
<b>11</b>	This is an interesting set of choices. Not sure I'm comfortable with the options.						

The first thing that catches our attention are the comments. Several respondents commented they did not like the wording of some of the categories as “worst”.

Respondents 1,3,5,6,7,8,9,10, and 11 indicated there was no “worst”. They preferred to address this question using a scale of best to least addressed.

The results of this rank ordering, in terms of how well the standards were addressed include:

1. Vision
2. Ethics
3. Learning and Teaching
4. Communities
5. The Larger Context
6. Operations

The most important pieces of information I learned from this question, possibly even more telling than the rank ordering, were the strong comments about the wording of this question. Roughly ten percent of the respondents to this question commented on the use of the wording, “worst”. They didn’t like it. This is helpful. It tells us that in the context of this study, even when respondents critique their preparation under these standards, the critique is constructive and in the end, people feel their UNCG graduate education was a positive enriching experience.

Table 4.33 The ISLLC Standards. Question 6.

Refer back to the standard in Question 5 you ranked the best. Describe some things you remember being highlights of your preparation.	
Answer Options	Response Count
	88
<i>answered question</i>	88
<i>skipped question</i>	35
Number	Response Text
1	The hallmark assignment for every class seemed to focus upon my vision for leadership.
2	How learning & Teaching in theory can relate positively with students of diverse backgrounds culturally & economically....
3	Ethics were stranded throughout each course in some way shape or form. It could have been everything from ethical behavior as an administrator, or ethics in testing, etc.
4	Courses in school law and critical pedagogy increased my awareness of the moral and ethical dilemmas in education; they helped me think more deeply about the issues I had to deal with.

5	The importance of vision was clear in the instruction that I received throughout my graduate experience. Many professors discussed having a focus, know where you are headed, have an idea of what you want the end result to look like..... This is a like a daily mantra for me in successfully operating a school. Everyday, my decisions are based on what is best for the students, teachers and members of my community and how do I get there.
6	Items remembered were School Profile, Action Project, and case studies in Law Class.
7	Dr. Lashley's school law class was very relevant. Also, classes where we did case studies and simulated experiences were helpful.
8	Class that caused me to deconstruct prior beliefs and reconstruct new beliefs about myself and my practices.
9	The school classes were helpful in preparing us to be school administrators.
10	The case scenarios in the ed. law class with Dr. Lashley were very beneficial.
11	We wrote multiple vision papers from various perspectives. The capstone experience was an excellent opportunity to reflect on my vision and how it had evolved during my program of study.
12	I just always remember the professors talking about my vision and how important it was.
13	I remember having long discussions and projects that addressed ethical leadership.
14	First, having a vision for the school in which all stakeholders would work toward accomplishing.
15	School law class
16	Classes based on leadership theory
17	The majority of the texts chosen by the instructors dealt with having a vision and maintaining it throughout all that we do as administrators. It was a recurrent theme through almost all of the classes.
18	UNCG did an excellent job addressing this standard by providing an open forum in each class where students were able to craft their vision of education through thoughtful discussion and debate.
19	Curriculum and instruction was most often the focus of lessons/instruction.
20	School Law and Ethics was a very helpful and resourceful class. Also, Special Education and Law should be placed on the required course list for all ELC graduate students.
21	Course with Deborah Jones which gave us specifics on how to effectively supervise and monitor teaching and learning; supervision course; internship where I was allowed to explore ways in which I could affect the teaching and learning that occurred in the class.
22	This was just a common theme that literally ran throughout the classes as a collective whole - I just felt really well prepared as I left the program to develop a real community centered on teaching and learning.
23	I received a curriculum specialist add on with the choices of electives. The curriculum focus definitely helped me to become an instructional leader.
24	Most of our classes focused on being instructional leaders and how to bring in best practices into the school. They need to expand that now to increase data analysis...we have become data rich and analysis poor.
25	Developing my own vision statement. Defining the steps to develop the school's vision statement.

26	Our school leadership paper was helpful. The MSA capstone experience really helped me develop my vision.
27	I believe the general challenge of looking at teaching from a holistic context of learning was a philosophical shift for me. The view of curriculum as the driving force behind instruction and learning and the notion of an integrated curriculum to produce the whole learner was a highlight. I remember being especially challenged by Dr. Purple and Dr. Williamson to view learning from multiple perspectives.
28	The time spent reflecting on my current understanding of ethical decision making, examining how I developed my views and how my history effects my current practice as a school leader.
29	Discussions about social justice and teaching strategies that reflect equity.
30	I remember discussing the importance of vision throughout the course work. If you have no vision, you can't accomplish the other goals that need to be addressed in your school. I also remember debating which of the standards was the most important while at UNCG...and I stood by the fact that having a vision is the MOST important standard of all.
31	Social and Democratic reform. The care and service to the "Others" who have been discarded and have not received due service.
32	Practical and real life applications utilized in every class.
33	Ethics statement, Dr. Villaverde's class and final paper.
34	Policy course, special education law (elective)
35	Schools are an integral part of the community. Schools must develop working relationships with parents, businesses, and other organizations in the community. Schools must educate all children in the community. Schools must develop meaningful programs to enhance parent participation not only in the school but also in their child's education. Schools must be visible in the community.
36	Collaboratively creating a vision statement for your school based on research of theorists and of other schools.
37	Most courses taught made me reflect on ethical decision making (i.e. fairness and educating all students)
38	An entire course on ethical leadership with Dr. Lashley.
39	Ethics papers, scenarios to write using the law but also using ethics, class discussions on the ethics of school leadership
40	Having the time, resources, and support to think deeply about my personal vision and how that connects to both a school community and in the broader context.
41	Law and ethics class...vignettes were GREAT!!! MORE, MORE, MORE...
42	Ethics paper; belief statements; ELC 615 (which should be a first semester course not a second semester course as I believe it is now)--this class is truly the foundation of the MSA program--the people I hear who are the most "disgruntled" with UNCG's preparation are people who took this course at a random time--not first.
43	I will always remember MIKE...Meet with all the stakeholders, Investigate the situation, Kids come first in any decision, Ethics must be used before any decision is made. I apply this rule no matter what I am dealing with and it works!
44	Internship, Law class, conversations with ELC classmates, Best Practices notebook
45	Ethics was stressed throughout the program. The law class was very good. We

	had to make ethical decisions through group work on dilemmas presented. There was a lead or point person who had to write memos to the faculty and staff with input from group members.
46	How the decisions I made affect the daily operations of the school. Dr. Lashley's law course.
47	Dr. Purple truly made me the educator I am today - my success and ability to travel the country and talk about moral education and the achievement gap and public education as the last battle of the civil war is a testament to our classroom discourse so many years ago. Brubaker's pragmatism and silver lining view holds me in the road....
48	We read and discussed numerous education and management themed books around the topic of establishing vision.
49	The vision of your learning community should be in the best interest of the children and it should be fair and consistent across the board. Your vision should guide your actions verbal and nonverbal actions because everything you say and do sends a message.
50	We practiced writing vision statements and had to articulate our leadership styles that would support our vision.
51	Understanding the connection between teaching and learning.
52	We read many articles and books on moral and ethical leadership. These readings were the foundation for papers we wrote or in-class discussions. There was also a lot of focus on building a sense of community and building capacity in those you lead. Those things have served me well in all levels of administration. I already had a strong foundation in teaching and learning. Operations is one of those things that I think I got the most training in as "on the job" training.
53	I worked very hard to organize and articulate my ethical beliefs in my ethical statement. Although I considered myself to be a basically ethical person, I had never given much thought to "the lens" through which I view my ethical beliefs. This was one of my favorite projects, because it forced to address how I came to believe what I believe.
54	Challenging ethical dilemmas were presented and framed in the larger community
55	Ethical activity was stressed in every class.
56	Most classes in the program had ties to vision.
57	My first experience in the area of vision was with Dr. Gobble. He was able to share the philosophy and the reason, but he also allowed (us) to make it applicable with (our) current job assignment. For the first time in my teaching career, I UNDERSTOOD the importance of the human factor.
58	Dr. Coble's class on the Superintendency focused on vision every night and the job of the leader to provide it. Excellent training.
59	Emphasis on the concept of success for all students and the significance of taking learners where they are and developing each into competent learners is most paramount in by development.
60	Excellent preparation in terms of vision/mission and culture of school as well as recognizing complexities of school administration
61	I recall the class taught by Dr. Larry Coble at the Center for Creative Leadership where we examined the importance of understanding the climate and culture of your school in order to begin discussions with staff and parents about the vision and mission of our schools.

62	The UNCG MSA program's foundation is providing opportunities and promoting equity, fairness, and equality for all learners. Integrity and character are essential qualities of a good administrator to meet the needs of the school and community.
63	I remember my professor stressing, that in order to have everyone on board each leader had to create a vision that all stakeholders could and want to take part in.
64	Race, class, global responsibilities of educational leadership
65	FIBS- Fundamental Individual Beliefs - helping to develop and articulate a vision of ourselves and how we want our school to be. Using lenses/frames to inspect organizations (schools) to identify strengths, weaknesses, blind spots, etc. Learning the volume and intensity of Public School Law and the importance of keeping up to date with court cases and decisions that could affect the public school realm. The importance of building community and building relationships. Working together as a school body to define learning and teaching practices and goals.
66	The study the culture of a school - research project, Vision statement, Best Practices projects.
67	NC School Law, student and employee rights.
68	Most courses spent time on vision. SIP knowledge.
69	Many of the classes referred to the "community" at large as potentially the most crucial factor for successful administrators. Understanding how to see the community through various "lenses". Realizing the importance of understanding how the community functions, its successes, its needs, etc. The FULL TIME internship is perhaps the best learning tool I had to understand community in action.
70	I most remember learning the frameworks of leadership that encompassed all of these. While I cannot recall the text we used, Dr. Gobble provided our class with excellent discussion and collaboration in internalizing all of the frameworks that influence our work as educational leaders.
71	The Public Law courses as well as Seminar Courses thoroughly addressed the importance of ethics and well prepared me for administration.
72	We wrote papers about our vision and we used our vision as part of our capstone presentation.
73	Law class, special education class
74	Internship
75	You must have a vision for your school in order to get it where you would like for it to be.
76	Ethics was always a focus related to all areas.
77	It would be an advantage to have more hands on practical knowledge such as dealing with difficult teachers. More emphasis needs to be on what constitutes a good leader.
78	Many philosophical debates and exchanges between faculty and students.
79	MSA--The writing of the ethics statement and the personal platform Ed.S--case study work, honing of vision
80	I will always remember Dr. Ron Williamson talking about membership and efficacy. He taught me about school culture and school climate and to always make sure that teachers know that they is important to me and that their opinions matter. We talked about the importance of a rigorous curriculum,

	community involvement, and professional and personal growth for teachers and staff.
81	How we were to lead our school with this vision as the driving factor.
82	You have to look beyond to make a difference. It is about a fundamental shift in thinking and action.
83	The importance of developing a solid vision.
84	Dr. Lashley focused a lot on ethics in all aspect of the schools. I remember him stressing the that your ethics will determine your destination.
85	The word "vision" came up in almost all of my course work. In a number of courses, I reflected on both my personal vision and school vision. In addition, I reflected on specific professional areas related to vision, i.e. my vision as a technological leader.
86	-Preparation on school assessment and evaluation, establishing a mission statement and vision for the school
87	Dr. Cooper did a fantastic job in helping to reduce the insulation that I had and allowed me to see how others live. The entire program's focus on social justice reinforced this concept.
88	Effective leaders must have a vision that is established by all stakeholders. The vision should always be re-examined and change must take place when and where it is necessary. You must get all members of the school community "on board" with the vision of the school. All stakeholders are responsible for making sure that the vision is being accomplished. We are all accountable for the success of all students.

I know the above comment section was lengthy, but I found it hard to simplify the comments into categories, having such a wide variety of responses. The data gathered in response to this question was qualitatively rich and I recognize that any attempt to reduce the 88 comments to categories is a gross over-simplification and loses some of the qualitative significance. Some reoccurring examples that graduates remember being highlights of the program include: law, vision, ethical leadership, the internship, evaluating one's beliefs and instructional leadership/curriculum and instruction.

I believe the data and significance of this question was sufficiently discussed in the previous chapter. The only comment I will make is that vision and ethics popped back up. We see again that this is a re-emerging theme and proof that these two areas are strengths of the three degree programs we are studying. We need to mention that within



these highlights, there is a mix of theoretical and philosophical aspects of preparation and the pragmatic components. Vision, ethical leadership, and evaluating one's beliefs would arguably fall into the category of theory while law, the comments about the internships, and instructional/curricular comments would arguably fall into the category of pragmatic preparation. Whether consciously or unconsciously, these graduates remember evidences from both elements of praxis as highlights. This is interesting in the context of all the discussion we have had throughout this paper, concerning the balance of theory and practice.

Table 4.34 The ISLLC Standards. Question 7.

Refer back to the standard in Question 5 you ranked the worst. Describe some specific things which should have been addressed more.		
Answer Options		Response Count
		79
<i>answered question</i>		79
<i>skipped question</i>		44
Number	Response Text	
1	The items listed on the previous page such as budgeting, action plans, and other operational issues.	
2	I really do not see Vision as worst....UNCG did a great job in helping us to develop our own sense of vision as to what we hold dear in ethical and value in our own lives...	
3	Vision is very difficult to define in a classroom. I think it depends on your school system, and somewhat your community.	
4	Very little course content covered this topic. I often wondered if this was because there was an overarching assumption that, because we worked in schools, we didn't need to learn more about best practices for student learning.	
5	The larger context was mentioned frequently and we were asked to recognize the importance of the political, social, economic, legal, etc. role in our individual districts. However, for the professors and through collaborative discussions we discussed political, social, economic, etc. issues leading students into the 21st century and preparing them for what lies ahead. Focusing on these issues will not create productive and successful students that are prepared for the workforce.	
6	I would be interested in having more discussion or exposure to activities which pertain to how to involve community in schools. (ESL, EC, African American students, poor students, etc.). Different activities for different AYP subgroups	

	would have been a wonderful resource.
7	Specific examples of the type of operational tasks we would be responsible for as an administrator. Budgeting, acquiring resources for our school, The paperwork aspect of the job.
8	Many classes neglect to tell you how to keep your job and to take the necessary steps to be effective and work for social justice within the schools.
9	I do wish I had received more training in school finance and also the evaluation of school personnel.
10	Since I am in the private school setting the political and legal issues were geared more towards the public schools.
11	I would have liked more information and experience navigating within the larger context. That would benefit those working in a larger urban district.
12	I had no idea how to run a school as far as buses or budget. I only knew about strategies that made students learn best.
13	I don't think that operations gets as much attention because each school operational procedures will be different.
14	I did not rank anything as the worst.
15	This was ranked the worst because we did not spend time on budgeting because it was said to differ between districts. There are some basic accounting codes that are used throughout the state and sources of money that we should have been more familiar with coming into administration. The outside training that I received was through the Principals' Executive Program. I found that to be valuable yet I also felt that the content could have been covered by guest speakers in the university program. There is a certain amount of time that should have been spent through dialogue or other methods besides the internship that pertained to daily operations. Principals without assistant principals must learn to balance it all even those issues that are traditionally given to APs which can be somewhat overwhelming without all of the human resources afforded to larger districts.
16	Preparation for the Teaching and Learning component tended to be very heavy on the philosophies/beliefs of each individual instructor. Furthermore, there was a large amount of time spent on issues and beliefs that Guilford County had at the time. The program did a nice job of providing a variety of experiences through students from other LEA's, but the program was definitely focused on preparing future instructional leaders for Guilford County.
17	How to better use resources available to all principals.
18	It's hard to understand how a school leader fits into the local political context of a school district until he/she has served in that district. However, in the world of education, future leaders need to be prepared to understand how important this role (political role) actually is to their success. It often has nothing to do with being an ethical or effective leader, but it has everything to do with playing the right political games with the right people on your side. It's not often pretty, but it's often reality. It's not really personal, it's just the name of the game.
19	Although I think this was an underlying issue throughout all of the classes, I still wish there had been a separate course on this topic specifically - particularly in terms of the ethics issues that arise when someone is a school administrator - I wish there had been more case studies.
20	Standard 6 is very difficult to prepare for because is truly is specific depending on the school that you are placed at. I think more emphasis needs to be placed on

	change and how to help staffs deal with change.
21	As I said- Ethics are born not taught...it is how you live.
22	I would have liked to have spent more time understanding how the state budget works in relationship to other sources of revenue (Title 1, local funds, etc.)
23	The more practical day to day stuff that Dr. Lashley and Dr. Williams are good about sharing are needed more.
24	The ethical challenges and responsibilities of the principalship were never addressed. We spent a fair amount of time studying the culture of the school and rarely discussed the importance of an ethically balanced leadership approach to students, staff, and community.
25	I am sure that the Larger Context differs depending on where you are working. Maybe more small group work with issues that are pertinent to the school setting would have been helpful.
26	I do not think operations is really important to learn in grad school. It is marked worst appropriately and it is not a bad thing.
27	I don't really think "The Larger Context" could have been addressed much more. I just put it last because I don't remember discussing as much about this standard.
28	Time Management and Operational systems. Personnel evaluation-With the SERVE office in the same building we never once had a presentation or information provided by this department. The state has many management and finance systems that were not addressed that need to be inserted into a course.
29	Use more specific examples in relation to real world experiences in the school system.
30	Introduction of various evaluation instruments, coaching resources, instructional strategies
31	More practical classes needed in classes such as the principalship. More needed by way of the class taught by Dr. Misti Williams-practical applications of the theoretical, decision-making exercises, hearing from other principals about practical ways of making it through a school year as a school leader.
32	A course in brain development and learning would have been helpful. I participated in such a program in the last county where I worked. Fascinating and beneficial information. Such a course could also include an overview of gifted and exceptional children and terms, laws, programs associated with them.
33	Involving community is more than theory it is practice. There needs to be more practice of involving the community. Lord, there are enough schools and families within a few short miles or blocks that could use UNCG's ELC department. I felt like I received some practice through my experiential ed. class but I do feel that you need to be apart of real events involving the community. Grace Church on Dick and Lee Street has a tutoring program for kids in the area, how about partnering up with them.... they're a couple blocks away.
34	Budgeting time, creating schedules for students, juggling all the hats an administrator has to wear.
35	Operations may have been mentioned, but not discussed.
36	The discussions took place about being instructional leaders however how to do that was not a part of the process....what we needed were methods for teaching teachers, strategies, insight into programs and schools that work effective staff development and resources for that type of development
37	I would not recommend addressing them more. It was more I gravitated to

	what I was most interested in.
38	the real job of being an AP the "B"s.
39	see question 4
40	For me there are none. The larger context is listed as "worst" only because I had to rank them.
41	Dealing with personnel and micropolitics.
42	Building operations, I am guessing is what this is.... It was just not a hot topic in the coursework.
43	I took a Doctoral class in operations that was not part of the regular Master's program.
44	There wasn't a worse... I wish perhaps I was a better coach to my teachers and others about teaching and learning, but as a classroom teacher I did what came naturally to me - and sometimes that is the hardest thing to teach others - that is the Art of Teaching; so I can't honestly say it is anyone's fault that I did not get enough exposure in doing this... I read all the books now on teaching and learning and all I can do for others is provide the framework and the rubric, I still can't give them the passion, the rapport with young people, and the soul of teaching.
45	I wish I had had more training on how to coach teachers and how to establish effective learning communities.
46	Working with diverse communities.
47	Operations and teaching and learning need more emphasis. In today's high accountability, many administrators are coming in to the role as previous counselors or other roles in education that do not have as strong a foundation in the areas of teaching and learning. Data driven decision-making and PLCs need strong emphasis beyond theory and more into practical application. Internships need to be more task driven in these areas so that candidates for the degree get more hands-on experience in these areas.
48	As a member of one of the first MSA cohorts, I had full classroom responsibilities in addition to trying to obtain experience with the day-to-day operation of the school. I feel that my colleagues who became administrator through the vehicle of the Principal's Fellows model, were more prepared for this area of leadership.
49	Budget, facility concerns, what is a problem, what is not a problem
50	Can't say
51	since so many of us were from different counties it was difficult to address all the political issues
52	(It would have been beneficial to have available one required curriculum course.) My classmates and I experienced a new to UNCG instructor for the teaching and learning course who had too many responsibilities both personally and professionally. I felt "cheated" out of a learning opportunity.
53	More practical time or exposure to day-to-day operations. My first task as an Assoc. Supt. was to design and open a new school in an existing facility. Lack of exposure to operational issues slowed me down a bit and I had to learn on the job. Most of the learning comes there anyway and that is okay if the theory and philosophy foundation is strong, but a little more exposure to operations would have helped.
54	Developing and articulating a vision was addressed but was not emphasized as the foundation of positive school development.
55	The Larger Context, I ranked last only because it was always included and a vital

	part of all the other standards.
56	I believed that they should have covered the financial piece a little better. I wanted to know what funds could be used for what and how money was allotted and given to school.
57	Dealing with daily problems, and learning how to navigate through them to make a difference in what really matters in the lives of families and children.
58	I wished we had had more classes/sessions with district level personnel whom could introduce and walk us through the various paperwork, processes, procedures for Guilford County. Since we belonged to a cohort, all of the participants were from GCS and were hoping to become administrators (or who became administrators during the coursework). Even if we were not immediately placed as assistant principals or principals right away, the background knowledge would have been immensely helpful for future endeavors/employment opportunities.
59	Strategies to work with PTA effectively in keeping instructional focus. Community schools and the politics of parents and the impact of the "buzz" on the ball field.
60	Communities and equity for students should have been more thorough.
61	Very little time spent on practical pieces of facilities, resources, or managing people. For bad or good it is and will continue to be a large part of this job.
62	I feel that issues related to teaching and learning should have been at or close to the forefront of the instruction at UNCG. This is something that is a daily issue within schools and there was very little discussion or preparation on how to "recognize" good teaching and learning. How do I know what good teaching looks like? How do I know if students are truly learning? Opportunities to look at real data would have been helpful...opportunities to understand value-added data would have been well worth the time spent.
63	As stated earlier in the survey, I feel more work can be done in providing students with knowledge in budgeting resources. While this is an area that requires experiential learning, I wish I had had more time to learn about budgeting.
64	All of the education courses thoroughly prepared me for my role as an administrator; however, I feel that budget/finance is an area that could be addressed in more detail.
65	I learned about operations in my internship portion but as much in the classes.
66	Finance Case studies on how to spend money and allocate resources
67	We rarely discussed how we can fix the problems in education. We focused mainly on working within the confines of a broken system.
68	Very little time was spent on operations.
69	Internship provided some information about operations, but students had to seek this information out from building administrators who were not always willing to share this level of information. Providing specific opportunities to students in this area would be functionally helpful.
70	More practical applications
71	Honestly, I don't "get" Standard 6. It is not relevant to me. The other Standards are tangible on a daily basis.
72	I am unclear about things such as fundraisers, vending machines, picture contracts, etc.
73	I think that each LEA is very specific in policies and procedures. UNCG could not

	begin the specifics, they prepared more for the greater good...not specific board policies.
<b>74</b>	How to assess the community in which the school is situated.
<b>75</b>	It was all addressed but due to time restraints it was not focused on as much.
<b>76</b>	I do not necessarily think that ethics should have been focused on more, I just do not feel that ethics was incorporated as much across my program's coursework as some of the other standards were.
<b>77</b>	As I've indicated, I'm not comfortable with this question's style. I could say that better opportunities to discuss global approach to education and the use of technology in the administrator's role would have been helpful.
<b>78</b>	Budget, budget, budget!
<b>79</b>	1. How to establish business partnerships with the community 2. How to use resources from the colleges and universities in the local area to benefit students and parents 3. How to strengthen parental support in communities where parents are less active

In comparison with the last question, more respondents answered the question about highlights of the program than gave feedback about things that should have been addressed more in their program. Eighty-eight people discussed highlights of the program. Seventy-nine people provided feedback about issues that should have been addressed more. I believe this in itself is telling. Human nature tends that we remember more of the bad than the good. For the last question to receive more feedback than this question is very complimentary of the ELC Department.

The range of responses to this question was broad. Several themes kept re-emerging. Some of those themes include:

- A. More preparation on involving communities in schools- parent involvement, business partnerships, etc.
- B. Budget and finance
- C. School politics- Respondents recognized that school politics are unique to every board of education and every school within each school system, thus making it difficult to teach.

D. Several individuals commented on the need for more training in the day-to-day operations of schools- buses, textbooks, school picture contracts, school schedules. Those same individuals recognized though, that the policies and practices vary with each school system, making it difficult for a preparation program to train in these areas. Some individuals see the need for more operational issues- “Building operations . . . it was just not a hot topic in the coursework.” A minority opinion felt there was not a need for more exposure in operational issues- “I don’t think operations is really important to learn in grad. school.”

E. Personnel and evaluations

F. Tapping into and using resources

It may seem odd or out of place that I would include a set of questions about the North Carolina Standards for School Executives in a dissertation seeking to understand the implementation and impact of the ISLLC Standards. There is a simple explanation for my rationale and logic in including these questions. This study would have had a void if I had examined the ISLLC Standards in isolation, with no reference point or comparison to another set of standards. We were taught by our parents that we should not compare ourselves to others. I know I was told more than once that comparing myself to others is not healthy and I simply needed to do my best and that would be good enough. Well, while this philosophy may help childhood self-esteem, it is a naïve philosophy for the workplace. I contend that we should continually examine ourselves next to others. It provides motivation to stretch and continually push toward excellence. I believe this same logic holds true within this study in the context of comparing the ISLLC Standards next to another set of standards.

Besides, it is helpful to gather perspectives and perceptions about these new School Executive standards as the ELC Department incorporates them into their preparation programs.

The next set of five questions was designed to provide comparative feedback between the ISLLC Standards and the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. The section, “A Comparison of the Two Sets of Standards” in Chapter Two provided background to this issue.

### NC Standards for School Executives Questions

Table 4.35 The North Carolina Standards For School Executives. Question 1.

How often does your job require activities related to the following standards?						
Answer Options	Almost never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily	Response Count
Standard 1- Strategic Leadership	2	5	15	22	58	102
Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	2	1	3	21	75	102
Standard 3- Cultural Leadership	0	4	9	26	62	101
Standard 4- Human Resource Leadership	3	3	9	18	69	102
Standard 5- Managerial Leadership	3	2	6	18	72	101
Standard 6- External Development Leadership	4	8	29	36	25	102
Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership	10	7	16	28	41	102
Comments:						7
<i>answered question</i>						102
<i>skipped question</i>						21
Number	Comments:					



1	These strands are more embedded in the moral life of schools and administration.
2	As I am currently retired, I cannot answer these questions.
3	I sell insurance.
4	In this job, one must be prepared to engage them all everyday.
5	Remember that I am a teacher, not an administrator.
6	Its all relevant to the job on a daily basis.
7	I am a retired public school administrator and even though these things are still important in my current position, they certainly don't have the same relevance

The responses to this question are interesting when compared with the responses to the same question about the ISLLC Standards. In Question One of the ISLLC Standards, respondents overwhelmingly indicated that they used all of those standards on a daily basis. Not all of the new NC Standards are used on a daily basis. Respondents indicated they engage in activities related to Standard 6- External Development Leadership on a weekly basis. Many of the participants, almost twice as many as any other standard, replied they engage in external development activities only on a monthly basis. Additionally, far more people said they engage in Standard 1- Strategic Leadership and Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership on a weekly or even monthly basis than any of the ISLLC Standards.

I tabulated the responses and formed a rank order based on how many respondents said they used the standards on a daily basis. This is a crude method, but it is an accurate way to tabulate how the standards are used, from most to least often. Administrators indicated their jobs require activities related to the standards in the following order:

1. Instructional Leadership
2. Managerial Leadership
3. Human Resource Leadership

4. Cultural Leadership
5. Strategic Leadership
6. Micropolitical Leadership
7. External Development Leadership

The data presented in the previous chapter, in regards to this question, speaks for itself. Respondents answered that they use the themes within the ISLLC Standards more frequently than those that comprise the seven Standards for School Executives. In analysis of this information, I am not sure what this infers. Are the facts of the matter really that practitioners don't apply these different facets of leadership as often, or is there something else going on? When these standards were conceived, as we have already discussed at length, the desired outcome goal was to provide a set of standards that more accurately met what administrators actually do, instead of what they should be doing. Perhaps these new standards have simply done a better job of encapsulating the functions of the education leadership practitioner, including those functions even when they occur only on a weekly, monthly, or even yearly basis.

Another option is the obvious one, which is that administrators do not engage in these standards as frequently as the components of the Interstate Standards.

Table 4.36 The North Carolina Standards For School Executives. Question 2.

<b>How important or relevant are the following standards to your success as an administrator?</b>						
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>No importance</b>	<b>Little importance</b>	<b>Some importance</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
Standard 1- Strategic Leadership	0	0	4	22	74	100
Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	0	0	0	10	92	102
Standard 3- Cultural Leadership	0	0	3	23	76	102

Standard 4- Human Resource Leadership	0	0	2	16	84	102
Standard 5- Managerial Leadership	0	0	4	26	72	102
Standard 6- External Development Leadership	0	2	12	35	52	101
Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership	2	0	13	29	58	102
Comments:						3
<i>answered question</i>						102
<i>skipped question</i>						21
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments:</b>					
<b>1</b>	As I am currently retired, I cannot answer these questions.					
<b>2</b>	Through my observations and completion of my program with UNCG including my internship, in Guilford County all these areas are highly stressed and demanded and maybe that is why I am selling insurance.					
<b>3</b>	I did not answer since I am not an administrator.					

The answers to this question help provide perspective for the last question. While some of the new standards are used only weekly or monthly, this does not necessarily mean that they are not important to the success of the administrator. The majority of respondents felt all of the standards were “very important” to their success. The rank order of the importance of the standards is a different rank order than how often the standards are required for their job. Instructional Leadership is still viewed as most important, followed by Human Resource Leadership, Cultural Leadership, Strategic Leadership, Managerial Leadership, Micropolitical Leadership, and External Development Leadership. The main difference is that managerial leadership is exercised more frequently than its importance to the success of the administrator would indicate.

Table 4.37 The North Carolina Standards For School Executives. Question 3.

To what degree are the following standards stressed in your school district?						
Answer Options	No importance	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Very important	Response Count
Standard 1- Strategic Leadership	1	3	7	33	56	100
Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	0	2	7	16	75	100
Standard 3- Cultural Leadership	0	5	18	26	51	100
Standard 4- Human Resource Leadership	1	3	9	35	52	100
Standard 5- Managerial Leadership	0	2	11	42	45	100
Standard 6- External Development Leadership	1	7	16	42	34	100
Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership	1	8	17	38	36	100
Comments:						4
<i>answered question</i>						100
<i>skipped question</i>						23
Number	Comments:					
1	I'm currently teaching at an international school and on leave of absence from my AP role in the U.S.					
2	There is a strong emphasis on instructional leadership, that embeds the other strands to a lesser degree.					
3	As I am currently retired, I cannot answer these questions.					
4	I know administrators have been trained in the new instrument but my involvement has been in the new teacher instrument					

The standards stressed by the school districts had a different order of priority than either of the previous two questions. Instructional Leadership is still stressed as the most important standard by school districts, followed by Strategic Leadership, then Human

Resource Leadership, Cultural Leadership, Managerial Leadership, External Development Leadership, and Micropolitical Leadership. There is incongruence in responses between the practicing administrators and the areas stressed by school districts. Practicing administrators see Managerial Leadership as more of a priority than the school districts, and school districts see Strategic Leadership as more of a priority. Also, the rank order of External Development Leadership and Micropolitical Leadership is reversed between school districts and practicing school leaders.

As I examine how the participants ranked these standards compared to the exact same question related to the ISLLC Standards, the participants scored the new standards lower (as stressed by their school district). As we discussed earlier in the study, there are a couple of standards that do not have a corollary across both sets, but for the most part, there are major similarities in the two sets. Even in the standards that correlate, the ranking was lower for the new standards. Table 4.38, below, provides an example.

Table 4.38 Comparison of Ratings.

	<b>No Importance</b>	<b>Little Importance</b>	<b>Some Importance</b>	<b>Important</b>	<b>Very Important</b>
ISLLC Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	0	1	2	20	85
NC Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	0	2	7	16	75

The only explanation I have for this data is that fewer survey participants answered this question about the new standards, compared with the same question about

the ISLLC Standards. One hundred people answered the question about the new standards. One hundred ten participants answered the same question about the ISLLC Standards. I can find no other explanation for these results.

Table 4.39 The North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Question 4.

<b>Does one set of standards more accurately address the responsibilities of your job?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
ISLLC Standards	6.9%	7
NC Standards for School Executives	18.6%	19
Parts of both	74.5%	76
Comments		8
<i>answered question</i>		<b>102</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>21</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments</b>	
<b>1</b>	The new standards match more of what is expected of us and gives us a better description of what is now expected of us as leaders.	
<b>2</b>	While I lean toward the NC Standards, both have relevance for my position. I believe, the role of a school administrator is a balance between instructional, moral, and political leadership for the students, school, and community. Each model has aspects of this, but the NC Standards are the better fit.	
<b>3</b>	This system is how NC principals will be trained and evaluated. However, The ISLLC standards are how principals are tested on the PRAXIS.	
<b>4</b>	As I am currently retired, I cannot answer these questions.	
<b>5</b>	More the ISLLC though.	
<b>6</b>	I think the ISLLC Standards are easier to wrap your mind around but I feel that the New Standards for School Executives does a better job requiring principals to GROW in their profession through the Principals Evaluation Instrument.	
<b>7</b>	Operations and management are not addressed in much detail on either evaluation instrument but are a very real part of the day to day operations of a school and the efficiency in which it functions.	
<b>8</b>	Neither really resonated with me as a whole so possibly parts of both.	

The purpose of this question requires explanation. One might say, “The North Carolina Standards for School Executives have been implemented in North Carolina. University-based education leadership preparation programs must adapt to the changing times. End of discussion.” Unfortunately, the landscape of the situation is not that

simple. The School Leaders Licensure Exam which, along with successful completion of the MSA program, qualifies an individual for a North Carolina entry-level Principal License, is based on the ISLLC Standards. Also, the ISLLC Standards are still used as the primary benchmark standards in 40 states. The ISLLC Standards still have a great deal of relevance for UNCG ELC Department students. Additionally, the UNCG ELC Department must maintain courses of study consistent with the ISLLC Standards in order to remain competitive on a national level. This question was important in order to discover graduates' perceptions on this issue and gather any advice. Before asking the more direction question about which set of standards to use as the primary influence, I wanted to take advantage of the opportunity to see whether graduates felt one set of standards was a more accurate representation of their jobs.

The majority of respondents, 75%, felt parts of both standards most accurately addressed the responsibilities of the job. Applying this information, it seems that the UNCG ELC Department is wise in continuing to use the ISLLC Standards while incorporating the new standards into their instruction. I believe this is the best solution to resolve the conflict. When I use the term "conflict", I am referring to being a nationally recognized and respected administrator preparation program while at the same time training future administrators for the unique North Carolina workplace.

It is interesting that of the respondents who chose one of the other two answer choices, respondents chose the new North Carolina Standards three to one over the ISLLC Standards. I think we have already gotten a hint in some of the previous open-ended responses as to why this is the case. This point will be resolved in the next question.

Table 4.40 The North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Question 5.

<b>As the ELC Department revises its Course of Study, which set of standards should they use as the primary influence?</b>		
<b>Answer Options</b>	<b>Response Percent</b>	<b>Response Count</b>
ISLLC Standards	6.8%	7
NC Standards for School Executives	35.0%	36
Parts of both	58.3%	60
Comments:		17
<i>answered question</i>		<b>103</b>
<i>skipped question</i>		<b>20</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Comments:</b>	
<b>1</b>	This is what the administrators will be evaluated on when they leave the program.	
<b>2</b>	DPI has already developed the Principal's Growth Plan from these standards. This will be the first year that we will be evaluated and assessed on the NC Standards for School Executives.	
<b>3</b>	I think you have to use parts of both for these because you want to make sure that its graduates are leaving the program with knowledge that they can use according to the state regulations/standards, etc.	
<b>4</b>	Our new evaluations are following this- I think it is best to address the standards that are expected of us state wide.	
<b>5</b>	See above	
<b>6</b>	There still needs to be an overview of national standards for the purpose of testing.	
<b>7</b>	There are several similarities between the two.	
<b>8</b>	Students need to be prepared for the standards to which they will be held accountable. There are some overlapping standards between the two. However, it makes no sense to hold on to ISLLC if they are no longer in use in NC school districts.	
<b>9</b>	With stress on NC standards	
<b>10</b>	The NC Standards for School Executives are broad. They are certainly imperative and require accountability. However, the ISLLC Standards are more applicable for one to consider who he is as an administrator; as a person. If an administrator is to be the instructional leader, he must know who he is and what his beliefs are before he can begin to be the school executive. It is important for MSA students to focus on WHY they are at UNCG taking courses in the MSA program. After participating in the program, I came away knowing more about who I am--my beliefs, my actions, my vision for teaching and learning. I understand my role as the instructional leader. I understand that (it) is all about relationships with students and adults.	
<b>11</b>	The ELC department must emphasize the importance of fairness and equity in the work place for administrators to assure that no assistant principal is discriminated against or persecuted by the principal.	
<b>12</b>	While the state is moving forward with the NC Standards of School Executives as the benchmark, there could be a blending of both sets of standards for	



	instruction and information.
<b>13</b>	A blend of both are needed to be successful.
<b>14</b>	Clearly aligning the ELC Department's Course of Study with the Standards upon which school administrators will be held accountable, better prepares the educational leader to be successful in their new roles.
<b>15</b>	Definitely the NC Standards for School Executives since this is the new state accountability model for administrators. Again, I also feel that these standards do a better job with administrator accountability.
<b>16</b>	More applicable to the actual position of principal.
<b>17</b>	This is what all administrators are going to be evaluated on so why wouldn't the curriculum be directly aligned?

The vast majority of participants realized the need to incorporate both sets of standards into the preparation programs. It is clear with the responses to this question that a shift is taking place in North Carolina. We can see from the comments that several individuals feel the pressure to focus on the new standards because of accountability reasons. Even so, several participants commented on the value of being exposed to both sets of standards in their preparation.

This question was a variation on the same theme of the last question, but instead of asking which one more accurately addresses their job, the question is focusing on which set the department should use as its primary influence. Again, the respondents indicated the department should use parts of both, but more people indicated the need to use the NC Standards. Practitioners have mentioned several times in responses to various questions that the ELC Department needs to begin concentrating on the new North Carolina Standards since that is the criteria they will be evaluated against. In these responses, I sense an undertone of anxiety and lack of perspective from people that feel compelled to march to a new beat. It seems as though the accountability bug has struck again. In these examples, global and forward-thinking has been exchanged for a survival

instinct to march to a pre-determined beat and conform to the boundaries placed on the administrators. I cannot blame these individuals. The current accountability model of education in North Carolina is intimidating. At the same time, we must remember the demands of the workplace are much broader and more complex than a pre-determined set of benchmark standards. Therefore, the best possible training for that workplace must also be broader and more complex than a pre-determined set of benchmark standards.

Table 4.41 The North Carolina Standards for School Executives. Question 6.

What feedback or suggestions do you have for the UNCG ELC Department about your experience as a student?		
Answer Options		Response Count
		65
Answered question		65
Skipped question		58
Number	Response Text	
1	None at this time.	
2	I feel that I received a sound, high quality education at UNCG that prepared me well for my career in administration.	
3	The program was very beneficial for me. I would try to streamline the internship process - to me, it was very cumbersome in the requirements (maybe because of a "changing of the guard" in the dept.). I certainly think that budgeting should maybe be a class unto itself, or at least a big part of one.	
4	I can't say that any part of my experience was bad. In some courses more than others, my thinking was challenged. The readings were especially enjoyable. I am a very independent learner, so I didn't always enjoy the group assignments, but I do understand and appreciate their value. Overall, I didn't just learn about schools or education or the role of an educational administrator. I came to have a better understanding of self. That is what I really value about the experience.	
5	My experience at UNCG was a JOURNEY that I will never forget. The MSA program far exceeded my expectations. I have changed and evolved so much as an educator since enrolling in the program. The professors were more than willing to be active participants in your experience and not just a deliverer of information. My experience was so fulfilling and enjoyable that I will be pursuing my doctorate in the next 2 years.	
6	I would like to continue to recommend more emphasis is placed on practical experiences. Additionally, I believe the administrative intern should focus on necessary activities and make sure that the administrative intern receives experiences relating to their needs after a strengths/needs assessment is done. It is critical that general experiences be provided. However, the main focus of certain counties should be emphasized if the future administrator is aware of	

	what district he/she would like to work in.
7	I feel that my program of study at UNCG prepared me as well as or better than my counterparts who went through other programs - even those who did the principal's leadership program full time. The only aspect of my job that I didn't feel adequately prepared for was the daily "operations" of the school.- budget, hiring, allocation of resources, dealing with parents etc.
8	Provide students with the navigational strategies and tools to work for social justice while continuously working towards the goals of the system within they are employed.
9	Continue to provide students with practical information and challenging experiences. They will then be successful school executives.
10	All my course work and assignments were very beneficial in preparing me for my current job in administration.
11	There were two professors that I learned the most from....Dr. Lashley and Russ Gobble. I enjoyed my time at UNCG and learned so much.
12	Thanks for working diligently to make me as prepared as possible. I could have never made it without a solid background in the basics. Thanks for the law class. I often refer to mental notes from class in the workplace.
13	My experience as a student was positive and exciting. The faculty was superior in all respects. The entire ELC Department was always knowledgeable, helpful, empathetic, and continually provided support and encouragement.
14	I thoroughly enjoyed the experience as a full-time student (Principal Fellow). The cohort format was definitely conducive to my learning style. The discourse was very interesting and thought-provoking if one allowed it to be. I found the readings outside the assigned text to be relevant. I would love to see the department provide funding to past graduates to continue with doctoral studies at university while being practicing administrators. The compensation in the administrative ranks in small districts does not lend itself to future study.
15	See previous comment. I was fortunate to have received an incredibly solid education through the ELC Department. Speaking with and interviewing more recent graduates makes me wonder if the quality of the education has decreased in recent years.
16	As a whole, I really enjoyed the program...my only suggestion is that there be more consistency across the courses about the rigor and the degree to which the course is applicable to the life of an administrator - some of the courses I felt like were not really relevant. I did love my time there though and really appreciated the knowledge and wisdom I gained from working with many of the professors there.
17	I would suggest that concentrating on how to handle change, first order and second order, is very important. You need to continue with the philosophies but students need to know how to fit their philosophies into how to create the impetus for change.
18	Provide support for those students who are coming through on their own without the help of the principal fellows. If it were not for the suggested course schedule- I would have been lost. My advisor was ineffective and I made no real connection with instructors or other students. I might have gotten more out of it if I had been a part of a cohort. I know that is one thing I am looking for when I continue on with my Ed.S or Doctoral degree.
19	I had a great experience at UNCG... I would encourage any interested parties to consider the program.

20	My Ed.S. and Ed.D. coursework was more meaningful than my MSA to me as a learner and a leader.
21	There would be a benefit to having a course or two after the internship or during the internship to allow the synthesis of theory and practice. It would also allow for the moral/ethical dimension of the position to be thoroughly explored. I remember the internship as spending too much time building a product notebook and not enough time delving into the challenges and issues of leadership.
22	During the practicum phase there should be a standard that all advisors follow addressing: site visits, expectations for portfolios, evaluations, etc. There was a wide range of expectations depending on who your advisor was.
23	Social Justice, equity, culture, gender, and sexuality are important and should be addressed as they are currently. However, I think we are oversaturated with these issues in every class. It gets tiring having the same exact conversations in different classes.
24	I appreciate all of the amazing professors that taught each class in the MSA Program. They prepared me well for my position as a school administrator. I commend UNCG for maintaining such an excellent program and look forward to meeting other graduates from UNCG as they enter the field of education. Thanks for making my experience at UNCG amazing!
25	I fully enjoyed it and feel that it has made me a better person as well as a better principal.
26	It is a good program. Continue to add the real life experiences into every class.
27	Excellent program and wonderful experience. The MSA program actually made me a better teacher-leader.
28	Continue to offer a rigorous program that truly prepares students for the job they will be doing as an administrator.
29	I had a fantastic experience during my years, 1994-2000, as a doctoral student. I surely appreciated having late afternoon and night classes; I would not have been able to attend day classes as I was also working. Having the faculty available before and after classes was a real plus. Computers and phones are good, but meetings in person are invaluable. The personal (human) aspect of professors is vital to a well rounded experience. Helping doctoral students decide on their thesis topic early on so they can begin doing parts of the research in appropriate classes throughout their time as students makes writing the dissertation easier. The practicums and internships, when well guided by the advisor and on-site advisor, are meaningful, insightful experiences.
30	Make the experiences of the PF program more balanced for the participants.
31	I felt very empowered, confident and prepared to be a school administrator from the moment I graduated. I have found my administrative experience challenging and rewarding and credit my success in large part to what I learned through the MSA program.
32	Great for theory...more real life examples needed...
33	Every course should include real life scenarios/responses as graded responses; even classes like 615 and Power & Politics. This does make every class have real life issues addressed within.
34	It was one of the best times of my life... so for me my input matched my outcomes.
35	Spend as much time as possible with administrators in schools. Invite them to

	the classes to lead students through real situations. Give them hands on training with the essential requirements of the job - creating budgets, allocating resources, time management, addressing personnel issues, leading groups of adults through decision making processes, and so on.
36	I felt well-prepared for a principalship. I was fortunate to have had meaningful practicum experiences and I loved the reading and could see the application of them to my practice. I am not sure I felt ready to be an AP. I wonder if the longer a person serves as an AP the further they get away from practicing what they learn in the MSA program. It might then be harder to pull back all of that learning to utilize it effectively. I would suggest training for those principals who supervise internships so that students get a more high quality experience as an intern. It that internship that should enable the student to see the connection between the theory and all of the reading and the actual practice. I worry that students don't always get to see those connections until they are thrust into a leadership role somewhere down the road.
37	With the focus on high stakes testing and student achievement, MSA candidates need a course that focuses on assessment and grading, such as the work being done by Doug Reeves, Robert Marzano, Rick Stiggins, etc. . . . Administrators need to know how to facilitate PLCs that address this issue on a daily to weekly basis.
38	Keep the majority of the coursework/theory 1st year, with internship and instructional strategies/nuts & bolts material in the second year.
39	I was disappointed in the rigor. I have another Masters Degree and really felt as though I had to work to obtain it. One comment I heard several times that bothered me was "Don't worry, everyone gets and A". I appreciate the opportunity to redo work that is not at the required level however, I saw some final "A" work from some others and knew that my A work was of higher quality. I felt it somewhat cheapened the work I had done.
40	Communication... The expectations as a department were not always clear. Some students (the Principal Fellows) knew information that the others did not. Some professors were "in the know" while others were not. It was difficult to navigate the nuts and bolts of the program. Again, this is my perspective. Just as we say to teachers in the classroom to make learning meaningful and practical, ELC should consider this as well. I am able to implement much of what I learned from my professors because the learning was made applicable and meaningful to the profession. Don't forget the human factor between professor and student. Get to know your students and why the ELC program is important to each. Some of us truly want to learn so we can become a better person and a better leader. Some of us need to be made aware that our beliefs and actions don't align in order for change to occur. Some of us need that relationship with a professor. I was fortunate.
41	It was great. I have no criticisms and still feel that I got the best preparation for school leadership that I could have gotten there. The faculty is genuinely concerned with the personal and professional development of each student and they have practical experience as well.
42	The program was good and I enjoyed going to class each day.
43	Don't give up, in many cases it is an endurance run not a sprint, in regard to completing all requirements pending the level of classes and degree program.
44	I just wish that when they start looking to add classes I would like for UNC-G to add a required course of education finance.

45	I enjoyed my experiences at UNCG, but would like to see a better blend of theory and practice.
46	My experience was unique as a member of the GCS MSA Cohort. We met on GCS's campuses. I believe some of our members mistreated the process or intent of this group; forgetting that we were there to receive a degree from UNCG and we were a part of that university program, even if we did not meet on campus. I was challenged by my experience in the ELC program at UNCG - I learned a lot about myself as well as the content of each course. When I decide to pursue employment in the administrative realm, I will surely draw heavily from my coursework, impressions, and lessons learned from the number of discussions, projects, products, course books, notebooks, notes, etc. Please remember that for many of the students entering an ELC program, they are still working full time in the educational field - many as classroom teachers. As I am now working on Montessori certification (which seems to be more work!), while teaching full time, I find it extremely hard to be an "A" student in both worlds due to the amount and intensity of projects and assignments. The professors need to hold students to high academic standards, but please do so with a great deal of flexibility and communication.
47	Very good experience. Politics and budget issues need to be addressed thoroughly.
48	I was surprised and dismayed that in this day and age there is still racism and favoritism (by instructors and employers) at this level, especially in the heartland of the civil rights movement. No one should have a preference based on race: white, mixed, or black. It degrades the system.
49	More Q and A opportunities from practicing school leaders.
50	Overall my experience was very positive and I feel strongly that UNCG has an excellent preparation program. I would like to see the social justice and transformative theories of leadership studied more in depth in the MSA program.
51	It is a thorough program that prepares future administrators well.
52	Overall, I feel as though I had a great experience going through the programs that I completed (3). The only problem that I recall was closer to the end during the writing of the dissertation where there were lots of inequities with regard to the standards that students were held to. Some floated through the process without being held to high standards while others had to cross every "t" and dot ever "i". Regardless of that short period of time, I am thankful for the opportunities that I have at UNCG and would recommend the program to aspiring administrators that I work with.
53	I had a wonderful experience as a Principal Fellow. The internship provided valuable experience.
54	Use case studies in every class to encourage professional dialogue, improve decision making skills. Force students to explore their personal beliefs about teaching and learning. Provide opportunities to learn how to empower others and develop leadership capacity in others
55	More case studies.
56	I think that it is a great program. I do have a few suggestions. I think there should be field trips incorporated into the program. I would have liked to have visited DPI in Raleigh or had the opportunity to meet the state superintendent or other legislative offices to see how things work and to ask questions. I did like the shadowing opportunities with principals. I think that it should be a requirement to do at least one outside of GCS to get a different perspective (Not

	sure if this was already a requirement or not.) I wish we could do more presentations and less paper writing (or at least giving us the option). I rarely if ever have to write papers for my job, however, I have to create presentations all of the time. In real life, the more creative the presentation, the better the chance that your message will get across effectively. The more practice we have with giving effective presentations and public speaking the better we'll get our vision to reach fruition.
57	I felt I had a pretty good experience. I would have liked to be more familiar with school law and how it effects the every day operations of a building. Sometimes I think I fall short in that area. I have to look up scenarios of the law. Also dealing with difficult teachers and implementing action plans.
58	It is essential for students to be placed in a supportive cohort to facilitate learning and networking beyond the classroom walls. When I went through the program, I did not have the benefit of a planned cohort. Some of us tried to create cohorts, but this was challenging. As a result, when I completed my degree, I did not have an immediate support system to facilitate my growth as an educator or educational leader.
59	I often comment that my program of study at UNCG was the best program that I have ever been in. I spent ten years teaching in the public school system in NC and two years at UNCG. Both experiences contributed greatly to the educational leader that I am today in Louisiana. I served as a Distinguished Educator (D.E.) for five years at the Louisiana Department of Education where I went into the lowest performing schools in LA and acted as a change agent. My education at UNCG greatly enhanced my performance as a D.E. I am presently a principal of a PK - 12 school in a rural parish in LA. The practices I studied at UNCG regarding educational leadership made me the effective leader that I am today. I think of Dr. Ron Williamson all the time as I enter my school before the teachers and leave in the evening after the campus is cleared. I owe UNCG respect for the outstanding education I received from 1996-1999.
60	I enjoyed my time at UNCG. After several interviews that resulted in no job, I realized that teaching was in my best interest. Since graduating, I have enjoyed having leadership roles in my school without the title of administrator.
61	I feel that that the experience that I had at UNCG greatly prepared me for the "real life" experiences of a public school administrator.
62	Great experience. I felt very prepared to enter my first administrative role. The mentoring and support after graduation was invaluable.
63	I am satisfied with my experience at UNCG. The professors were always approachable, fair, and knowledgeable.
64	I would like to see an increase in the practical part of the program. The theory was great but I was a little behind when it came to other aspects of being ready to do "the job".
65	I had a wonderful learning experience at UNCG. The program taught me so many principles that I will utilize once I obtain a leadership role. I would suggest that some workshops or classes be devised that address effective discipline practices/programs for students on the elementary school level, training on how to conduct effective professional development for staff, providing administrative support for novice teachers, and testing/accountability.

This last question yielded some of the richest qualitative data. Even though the responses, above, take up a substantial amount of space and a fair amount of time to digest, the information is useful and very pertinent to the research questions of this study. In Chapter 1, we discussed the primary and secondary research questions of this study.

How do UNCG graduates of the ELC Department at UNCG between 1998-2008 feel their preparation program, centered around the ISLLC Standards, prepared them for their roles as school leaders?

- A. Are there crucial pieces that were left out?
- B. As the ELC Department incorporates a new set of outcome standards, are there lessons to learn from the past ten years?

This open-ended question probes into the heart of the primary and two secondary research questions. The majority of the comments were positive. Negative comments revolved around such themes as not being able to connect with peers and faculty, not having enough guidance and advising help, and inequities in expectations across the department. Constructive feedback called for more real life or operational help such as a budget or finance course. Comments also called for training in more daily issues like scheduling, student discipline, fundraising, handling school picture and yearbook contracts, buses, and textbooks. Respondents asked for more question and answer opportunities with practicing school administrators, case studies, more coordination or oversight during practicums and internships, more departmental coordination, and more planning of the curricula in each class.

In analysis of the data from this question, multiple pieces of constructive feedback were shared. Some of that information was discussed in the last chapter. In qualitative



research classes, we are taught that the purpose of data analysis is to look at the data in order to get a sense of it, attempting to decipher the data to see the story that is being told. As I do that, the story this data wants to tell is quite clear. In fact, if anything, I was probably looking for a different story. The graduates of the ELC Department between 1998 and 2008 who participated in this study, told the story over and over again that their experience was satisfying and they were grateful for the education they received. Participants talked about being “better prepared than (their) counterparts who went through other programs”. They described their experience as, “positive”, “wonderful”, “high quality”, “thorough”, and “a journey that I will never forget”. They talked of the faculty as, “superior”, “knowledgeable”, “helpful”, and “supportive”. Of course, constructive feedback was included, but the majority of the comments centered around thanking the ELC Department and its professors for the set of knowledge and experiences that changed their lives.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

##### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this study was to discover the effectiveness in using one set of standards (the ISLLC Standards) for equipping graduates of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro MSA, Ed.S, and Ed.D programs, between the years of 1998-2008, with the skills needed to be successful in their roles and responsibilities as school leaders.

##### **2. Need**

The need for this study was threefold. I was curious about how my peers felt training under the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their positions of education leadership. By learning how this topic affected those whose experience paralleled my own, it would further validate my own experience and the experiences of others. Please see Figure 5.1, below.

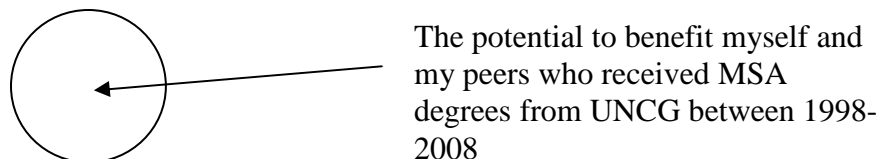


Figure 5.1 The Need For This Study.

Another way this study could have significance is represented by a second concentric ring, larger in scope than the first. The data collected, analyzed, and interpreted from this study has useful information that could be helpful to the Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations (ELC) Department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG). Upon reaching the ELC department at UNCG, any constructive conclusions and recommendations could be used by the department to revise and update the curriculum and course of study to impact their students for years to come. Please see Figure 5.2, below.

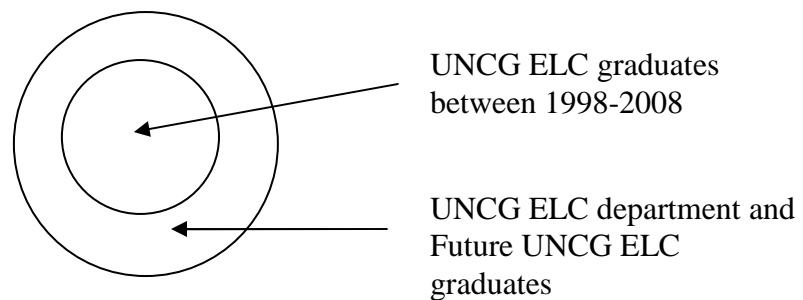


Figure 5.2 The Second Need For This Study.

Yet another potential contribution of this study could contribute was illustrated by a third concentric ring, still larger, encompassing the first two, and larger in scope and influence. The content of this study addresses an evident void in the literature base. This study stands to fill a void in literature within this one specific niche. Figure 5.3, below, represents this specific need in relation to the previous two.

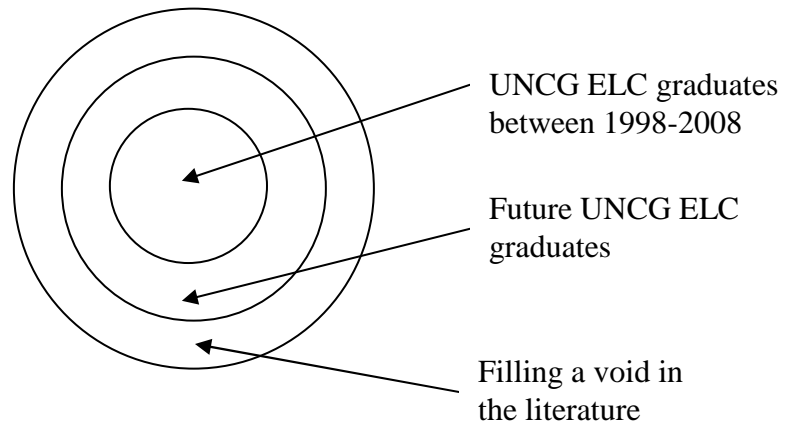


Figure 5.3 The Third Need For This Study.

Figures 5.1-5.3 detailed the intended beneficiaries and the need for this study.

### 3. Research Questions

This study sought to address the following primary research question:

How do UNCG graduates of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations, between the years 1998-2008, feel their preparation program centered around the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their roles as school leaders?

Secondary questions included:

1. Are there crucial pieces that a program specifically centered around the ISLLC Standards left out?
2. Are there lessons to be learned as the UNCG ELC Department broadens the focus of the Course of Study to address both the NC Standards for School Executives and the ISLCC Standards?

### 4. Methodology

This study used a mixed-methods approach. Interviews were utilized in the first phase of research to craft the most effective survey instrument. Four UNCG Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations graduates were interviewed. The interview phase yielded very beneficial information. A survey questionnaire was used as the primary data

collection instrument. A web-based survey company was chosen as the delivery method for distributing the data collection instrument.

## **5. Data Collection**

Three hundred prospective participants were approached to take part in the study. Forty-two of the prospective participants, or 14%, were invalid. I was left with a remaining population size of 258 individuals for the study. The return rates for similar studies range between 25% to 40%. This study had a 47.7% participation rate, or 123 individuals.

## **6. Data Analysis**

The study stayed within the confines of the research questions and accomplished the purposes it set out to achieve. But, I expected the study to discover a larger amount of data about the ISLLC Standards. Instead of discussing the successes and weaknesses of their education in a direct connection to the ISLLC Standards, study participants preferred to discuss their experience in more general terms.

Study participants talked very highly of their experiences as students in the UNCG ELC Department. Additionally, the overwhelming majority of participants felt their ISLLC-based education more than adequately prepared them for the roles and responsibilities of their workplaces.

## **Conclusions**

### **1. The unanticipated direction of the study.**

Before we address the primary and secondary research questions, we need to discuss an unanticipated event that happened as the study took place. The event that I am speaking of was unplanned and definitely not predicted.

During the planning stages of this study, the whole goal of the study was to better understand graduates' perceptions of their education experiences, all in relation to the ISLLC Standards. The timing for this topic was perfect. As the department integrated a new set of standards, it was the perfect time to provide reflective feedback about the previous set of standards to inform practice for the incorporation of the next set of standards. The whole premise of the study was that if we could understand graduates' experiences in relation to the ISLLC Standards, then here at the Conclusions and Recommendations portion of the project, we would be able to apply our learned knowledge to the new NC Standards for School Executives. The only problem is that the natural evolution of the study took a different direction. Graduates were very willing to share their ideas about their experience. You will remember that we learned a great deal about graduates' perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the program. We even learned information about how their schooling has met the demands of the workplace. Where the study took an unexpected turn, was that the participants did not want to talk in terms of the ISLLC Standards. They wanted to talk in general terms. In both phases of data collection, participants were even provided with a copy of the standards to keep in

front of them to reference, as they answered the questions. Still, individuals did not directly reference or tie their answers in to the ISLLC Standards.

Perhaps this could be seen as a design flaw and the study should have never intended to examine the ISLLC Standards, but rather just their experience as a whole. In that case, the entire premise of the study was faulty and ill-conceived.

However, while that is one way to think about it, it is not my opinion. I do not consider the conceptual design of the study to be a failure. Instead, I think what we witnessed in this study is a very common phenomenon in research. The study did not produce canned results. It did not necessarily adhere to the prescribed course, in terms of enlisting feedback about the ISLLC Standards. This in itself is a completely acceptable occurrence in research. I believe the only misstep would have been if I had tried to force the study in the direction I wanted it to go, or the direction I thought it should go. Such actions would have compromised the study. As it stands, we have a productive and successful study that went through the proper steps, gathered reliable and trustworthy data, data that was rich in terms of the quality and depth of answers, and had value in that it could be analyzed for the purpose of informing practice. All in all, I believe the study was a success.

## **2. The primary and secondary research questions.**

I would like to take this opportunity in the closing pages of the research project to revisit and hopefully answer the Research Questions.

### The Primary Research Question

How do UNCG graduates of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations, between the years 1998-2008, feel their preparation program centered around the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their roles as school leaders?

Honestly, I have a hard time answering this question as written, “How do UNCG ELC graduates feel their preparation program *centered around the ISLLC Standards* prepared them for their roles as school leaders”. It is much more reasonable to answer this question without the italics, “How do UNCG ELC graduates feel their preparation program prepared them for their roles as school leaders”.

Graduates *do* feel their graduate program prepared them for their roles as school leaders. But, the question asks more. The question asks *how* the graduates feel the program prepared them for roles as school leaders. This calls for examples. I think an appropriate place to begin answering this question can be found in the data from General Questions, Question 7. You will remember that 52.6% felt the UNCG ELC program prepared them “very well” for school administration. Another 45.6% of respondents felt the ELC program prepared them “adequately”. So, that gives us a degree or a measure of the preparation. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents felt the program prepared them for their roles.

Now we need to know the specific areas in which they felt prepared. To answer that question, let’s look at the data from two different survey questions. The ISLLC Standards Question 5 indicates that survey participants felt best prepared in the area of Vision, followed by Ethics, then Learning and Teaching, Communities, the Larger Context, and Operations. Another survey question that helps answer the primary research question is the ISLLC Standards, Question 6. You will remember this open-ended response provided feedback about highlights of their preparation. There were 88



responses to this question. Clearly, *how* graduates feel their program prepared them for school leadership was by equipping them with tools. The tools included such topics as:

- vision
- ethics
- school law
- deconstructing students' prior beliefs while guiding and challenging them as they constructed new beliefs
- truly learning the relationship between teaching and learning
- examining how we develop our views
- social reform
- policy-making
- schools as a part of the community
- best practices
- school culture and climate

I have listed just a few examples of how UNCG ELC graduates feel their program prepared them for their roles as school leaders. Many other examples are provided within this study.

#### The Secondary Research Questions

1. Are there crucial pieces that a program specifically centered around the ISLLC Standards left out?

When this question was composed, well before the study was conducted, I thought it was a very straightforward question that would be easily answered. Now that I revisit the question from this different vantage point, the question is not quite as simple to answer.

I believe a starting place to answer this question is the feedback from the ISLLC Standards Questions 5 and 7. You will remember that Question 5 asked the survey participants to rank how each of the six ISLLC Standards was addressed, from best to worst. Question 7 asked respondents to refer back to the standard in Question 5 they

ranked the worst and describe some specific things which should have been addressed more. Of the 79 comments provided, the majority of the comments were a defense of the standard that had ranked the worst. Many of the comments in effect said, “I don’t see this standard as bad in any way, it was just lowest in the ranking.” Many comments took issue with my wording of the question. They felt the question attempted to force them into an answer that would be misinterpreted. They took great exception with this. Answering the question according to this feedback would lead me to say, “No. There are not any critical pieces this program, centered around the ISLLC Standards, left out.”

A second way to answer this question, in keeping with the phenomenological tradition, would be to get a sense of how people *feel* about the strengths and weaknesses of their ISLLC-based education. Reflecting back over the feedback provided in the study, there was a clear sense that both interview and survey participants were largely very pleased with their education and they felt their ISLLC-based education adequately prepared them for their jobs. Answering the question from this perspective, I would again say, “No. There are not any crucial pieces the preparation program left out.”

There is a bit more to this question though. I noticed when I re-examined this question at the close of the study that the question can be read two different ways. The question could be read, “Were there crucial pieces of your preparation left out?” Or, the question could be read, “Were there crucial pieces of your preparation that were left out because the program was centered around the ISLLC Standards?” I think we can sufficiently answer, “no” to the second interpretation. But, let’s go back and re-examine the first interpretation. I have already stated the vast majority of study participants

believe there were not any glaring pieces that were neglected, but to leave it at that would have no educational benefit. Now that we can say with confidence there were not any failing areas of the program, let's go back and find some areas that participants felt need to be addressed. To find these areas, I refer back to ISLLC Standards Question 7. Seventy-nine individuals provided feedback in regards to the ISLLC Standards they ranked the lowest, in terms of their preparation. We have already discussed this data, but as a reminder, budget and finance issues were most prevalently mentioned. Other areas mentioned include:

- best practices and case studies
- involving communities in schools
- tapping into resources and how to most effectively use those resources
- time management
- creating a learning community
- differentiating between problems and non-problems
- facilities
- managing people

Again, each of these issues was presented as an area the department might want to address in the future. None of these were necessarily associated with shortcomings due to being trained under the ISLLC Standards.

2. Are there lessons to be learned as the UNCG ELC Department broadens the focus of the Course of Study to address both the NC Standards for School Executives and the ISLCC Standards?

I believe this question can best be answered by re-examining the results from the North Carolina Standards Questions 4,5, and 6. Question 4 asked, "Does one set of standards more accurately address the responsibilities of your job?" Question 5 asked respondents which set of standards should be used as the primary influence. Question 6

elicited feedback and suggestions about their experience. All three questions allowed for open-ended responses.

You may recall the answers from Question 4 suggest that parts of both sets of standards most accurately address the responsibilities of their jobs. Additionally, the vast majority of study participants feel the ELC Department should use both sets of standards to guide the MSA, Ed.S, and Ed.D Courses of Study.

Comments indicated that the ISLLC Standards were more precise and more easily understood, while respondents feel driven to the new standards since they will be evaluated by these standards in the workplace.

The biggest lesson graduates wanted the department to know from Question 6 was that their instruction was sound and the program was solid. Other messages that were sent include:

- the department needs to teach how to handle change and how to create change
- create systems to provide more support for students
- more integration of real-life instruction

### **3. Addressing the phenomenon.**

This study fit the criteria of a phenomenological study. Phenomenological studies are rooted in philosophy and psychology. In keeping with the phenomenological tradition, this study sought to discover how practicing school leaders *felt* the ISLLC Standards prepared them for their jobs. In this following section, I would like to visit the themes of the phenomenological qualitative research tradition, and examine whether this research project met the requirements of the phenomenological research tradition.

There are four themes common to phenomenologies (Stewart and Mickunas, 1990):

**A. A return to the traditional tasks of philosophy**

-the return to the Greek conception of philosophy as a search for wisdom without the need to become bogged down in empirical science

**B. A philosophy without presuppositions**

-the suspension of all judgements about what is real and accurate until it can be discovered

**C. The intentionality of consciousness**

-experiences are composed of outward appearances and perceptions and inward meaning

**D. The refusal of the subject-object dichotomy**

-the reality of an object is only perceived within the meaning of the experience of an individual

While the study did follow a prescribed course, it was certainly not bogged down in the motions of research, especially quantitative research. The requirements of the research design and implementation process did not get in the way of the “search for wisdom” which, in this case, was enlisting feedback and opinions from graduates about their experiences. I think this is one clear advantage of qualitative research. The research process is not so sterile as to stifle creativity and prevent the researcher from following the natural direction the research wants to take.

The second theme of phenomenological studies was also applied. As a researcher, it is hard to approach a project without any presuppositions. I did enter the research project with presuppositions, or at least a judgment about the topic I wanted to research. But, as the process wore on, I abandoned that goal in the interest of legitimately following the phenomenon to see where the data led.

Of course, the last two themes were central to the study. As we now know, we acquired some data about the phenomenon of the effectiveness of the ISLLC Standards in preparing educational leaders for the workplace, but by and large, the study changed shape. What we ended up studying was the phenomenon regarding the effectiveness of the UNCG ELC Department in preparing educational leaders for the workplace. We now know a great deal more about that phenomenon.

### **Recommendations**

This study yielded a large amount of data. As such, it is not possible to make recommendations for each story told by the data. Instead, I would like to address several over-arching themes that repeatedly presented themselves and make some recommendations in response to those themes.

#### **1. The need to move some courses from the Ed.S/Ed.D Course of Study into the MSA Course of Study.**

There are several courses typically taken by Ed.S and Ed.D students that respondents indicated would be very helpful in the MSA Course of Study. Naturally, this presents a problem. There is only so much room within the MSA Course of Study. I am sure the department would wish to add multiple courses to the MSA program, if they were able.

Study participants indicated that some of the Ed.S and Ed.D courses should be considered crucial to the preparation of all education leadership students. One example is the Personal Leadership Assessment Course, traditionally taught by Dr. Larry Coble. Participants commented that this course was highly valuable and should be considered mandatory for the MSA program. The budget course is another example. This course is

offered in the Ed.S and Ed.D course of study, but is not typically taken by MSA students. Study respondents feel this course, if re-vamped, would be another essential course for the MSA Course of Study.

## **2. The need for more departmental collaboration and oversight of courses.**

We heard a call over and over in the study for more departmental collaboration and oversight of courses. I will further break this recommendation down into three sub-categories.

First, this study uncovered the need for more departmental collaboration and oversight for the purpose of eliminating the overlap of coursework. Multiple courses had similar assignments. This left graduates feeling there was a level of redundancy that could be minimized.

Another reason for more departmental collaboration is to provide accountability related to the relevance of each assignment. Survey respondents shared examples in which some courses and some assignments within those courses did not seem to align with the overall goals and direction of the department. It appeared to students that some of the pieces of the puzzle did not seem to fit into the larger picture.

This study also recommends the need for more departmental collaboration to ensure the uniformity of grading, workload, and expectations. This area was referenced numerous times associated with examples of inequity.

## **3. The need for a better balance of theory and practice.**

The third recommendation is the need for a more appropriate balance of theory and practice, specifically the need for more instruction in pragmatic or practical areas.

The comments in the study relating to this recommendation are broad and numerous. Study respondents would have appreciated more opportunities to acquire the practical knowledge and skills of the workplace. They spoke of the need for more schooling and practice on personnel issues. The areas of Action Plans, staff evaluations, as well as hiring and firing were some specific examples cited repeatedly. Budget was another area. Even though most graduates enter the workplace as assistant principals and are not immediately responsible for school budget and finance, numerous comments were made about not having enough instruction in this area. The last example I will use to reinforce this point is the area of operations. Respondents echoed the need for more schooling in the nuts and bolts of a school-- buses, books, discipline, scheduling, and others. I recognize that school systems have different practices and policies for handling the daily life of a school, making it very difficult for a preparation program to prepare students in this area. At the same time, respondents felt the shock was too great and graduates were too far behind the learning curve in these areas.

#### **4. Keep playing to the strengths.**

Study participants indicated their preparation in the philosophical and theoretical components of leadership was excellent. Two strengths are the areas of Vision and Ethics. I would recommend the UNCG ELC Department be mindful of their strengths in these areas and continue to play to these strengths as they incorporate another set of benchmark standards.

In examining Recommendations Three and Four, one cannot help but notice the duality and double-speak in them. Recommendation Three discusses the need for more



practical instruction, suggesting the balance is askew. At the same time, Recommendation Four calls for the department to recognize and preserve its strengths as the department incorporates a new set of standards. The strengths are primarily philosophy and theory-based. Clearly, these two recommendations seem to be in conflict. What I would say in response is that these recommendations are borne directly out of the major themes that emerged in the study. All data gathered within a study does not always agree, especially when the population sample size is comprised of 258 individuals. Our goal as researchers is not necessarily to make all of the data fit perfectly together. That would be impossible and manipulative. Our goal as researchers is rather to look for trends and themes that emerge and evaluate those trends and themes for educational benefit.

#### **5. Use both sets of standards.**

The ELC Department has decided to incorporate the new set of North Carolina Standards into their practice, while continuing to use the ISLLC Standards. The results of this study reinforce that decision. The balance in using both sets of standards will not be easy. While both sets of standards do overlap, they also diverge in some areas. It is necessary to continue using the ISLLC Standards to maintain a preparation program with relevance and significance on an interstate level. As we saw in our study, many of the ELC Department graduates are employed outside of North Carolina.

#### **6. Find relevance.**

Time and again, participants reinforced that they connected most with the material that had relevance for them. One of the questions in both phases of research asked

participants to discuss highlights of their preparation. Highlights usually included an assignment that taught the respondent something about himself or herself or something that has a deep and crucial connection to his or her work. Conversely, the assignments and topics that were most abstract or appeared to have a low degree of relevance were most often dismissed or were spoken of in terms of needing improvement.

### **Confessional Tale**

I see the value and need to discuss one other area. Literally, hundreds of pages have been spent analytically discussing this research project. But, up to this point there has not been an appropriate forum to discuss the experience of this research project from a global perspective. I think there is value in discussing some successes and struggles of this experience. I would like to start with the struggles and work toward the successes.

### **Struggles**

#### **1. First-year principalship and the dissertation.**

The first struggle was coincidental. I began my dissertation phase of doctoral study at the exact same time I received the appointment to my first principalship. Both of these endeavors require an enormous time commitment and amount of focus. I found it very hard to juggle the responsibilities of the first-year principalship and getting the dissertation started at the same time.

#### **2. Narrowing the vision.**

In addition to my professional responsibilities and dividing my energy between two foci, there was at least one other cause for my struggle in getting the dissertation started. I had a hard time narrowing my vision for this study. I found myself spinning

my wheels, overwhelmed by the breadth and depth of a study on administrator preparation and the ISLLC Standards. The Literature Review alone provided more possible tangents than I ever could have addressed. When I realized the need to concentrate on just one niche rather than having to know everything that deals with both of these topics, the clouds dissipated and the study moved forward.

### **3. Unreasonable goals.**

I encountered a third struggle during the beginning stages of the dissertation. I had to get over the false perception that my dissertation had to be the next “great American novel”. Because of my desire to excel and create a good work product, I was convinced that this particular dissertation had to be ground-breaking. It had to re-shape the entire future of public education in this country. Such a mindset tends to stifle rather than inspire. I smile now at the naivety of such an aspiration.

### **4. My own attitude.**

Another struggle I encountered and was forced to conquer was my own attitude. The sheer volume of work and time that goes into a project of this scale elicits a whole range of emotions. I started out excited and energized about taking this journey. That excitement faded over several months and turned into a determined grit to persevere and complete the task. As time continued to wear on, though, my perception of the task changed. I no longer felt like I was making headway, but rather that the task was getting bigger and bigger at a faster rate than I could work. It was at this point that my attitude got in the way of productivity and became an obstacle. I became almost angry at myself that I wasn’t conquering this task with more speed and efficiency.

## **5. A false mindset.**

Another struggle was that I initially worked on the project during small chunks of time- 30 minute to one hour blocks of time, when it was convenient. As a result, I could never get in a “zone” and develop any kind of flow or momentum. The constant starting and stopping was torturous. In hindsight, this was a completely dysfunctional way to approach the project. It was unproductive and proved to expend a great deal of time. Also, I realized that if I simply worked on the project when it was convenient, I would never get done. There were not enough convenient moments in my day to accomplish the task. I had to change my mindset. I learned the problem I was experiencing was not as much a problem of time as much as a problem with the way I had prioritized the study. The mindset I eventually adopted was that completing the dissertation was a major life goal and a supremely important priority. Other priorities would have to be temporarily suspended in the interest of this goal.

## **6. Technology limitations.**

Another struggle of my dissertation experience was the software used for the second phase of research. Even though Survey Monkey was an extremely user-friendly and highly developed software application, it still had shortcomings: so much so that IRB modifications had to be made, altering the design protocol, in order to accommodate the abilities of the software. I remind us that any time a study is dependent on technology, the researcher will always, to some degree, be at the mercy of that technology. The use of technology added an additional dynamic to the study.

## **7. Doubt.**

The last struggle I want to mention is, without question, the most important to me and the struggle that I am most proud to have conquered. Growing up, I was an average student at best. I never knew whether my lack of academic success was due to a lack of motivation or whether I truly had a lack of ability. It wasn't until my undergraduate college years that I began to academically excel. Through my undergraduate and graduate experiences, I worried that I would one day reach my academic threshold-- the point at which I could go no further.

I must confess, during my dissertation experience, there were actually two independent projects taking place. One was the research project that has been discussed at length in this paper. The second project was my battle with the seven aforementioned struggles. Battling and conquering these struggles was an integral piece of my dissertation experience. These struggles acted somewhat as the gatekeepers. I could not complete the research project without getting past the gatekeepers.

I must say that I feel very much like what I imagine it feels like to graduate from military boot camp. I have been challenged and stretched, like no other time in my life. It is exhilarating to be pushed to one's breaking point and not yield.

## **Successes**

### **1. The faculty.**

One of the most memorable successes of this dissertation experience has been the faculty of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations. I would echo the comments we read in the study that describe the faculty as knowledgeable and challenging, yet friendly, approachable, and supportive. The department does not have an “us against them” mentality. Rather, it is a collaborative journey. Without a doubt, I view the support of the faculty as one of the strongest assets of my dissertation experience.

## **2. The lessons I learned about myself.**

As I think back over my journey through the dissertation, I can clearly identify at least one other success that stands out. The dissertation experience taught me a great deal about myself. This experience taught me the qualities of discipline and perseverance. It also taught me patience. The dissertation journey is not a short one. It cannot be run as a sprint. I would imagine that anyone who approached this journey as a sprint would soon run out of energy. They would also shortchange themselves for what the journey is intended to be- a deep, lengthy, arduous, and rigorous learning process. I think patience is key, because it forces the researcher to establish a rhythm and a pace for the journey.

I learned other qualities about myself throughout this process as well, but I would prefer to spend the remaining time discussing what these qualities have done for me. First, the qualities I learned about myself through the dissertation process gave me confidence. I realize that I am a legitimate member of the education leadership profession. I realize that I did not get here by accident or by mistake. I know now that I am not just tagging along. What I am speaking of, is that I feel empowered. If I learned

nothing else during the dissertation, this alone would be enough to make the entire journey worthwhile.

The qualities I learned about myself through the dissertation experience have also given me the courage to continue challenging and stretching myself, even after I complete the doctoral program. I ran across so many areas of interest during my studies. The dissertation experience has given me the courage to continue challenging myself by pursuing these interests. I am reminded of a quote by Eden Phillpotts, “The universe is full of magical things, patiently waiting for our wits to grow sharper” (Phillpotts, 2008). For me, this is not the end. No. It is just the beginning!

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## **Appendix A.**

### **ISLLC Standards/NC Standards For the Preparation of School Leaders**

#### **Standard 1: Vision**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community.

#### **Standard 2: Learning and Teaching**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.

#### **Standard 3: Operations**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

#### **Standard 4: Communities**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

#### **Standard 5: Ethics**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.

#### **Standard 6: The Larger Context**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

#### **Standard 7: Internship**

The internship provides significant opportunities for graduates to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified in Standards 1-6 through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned

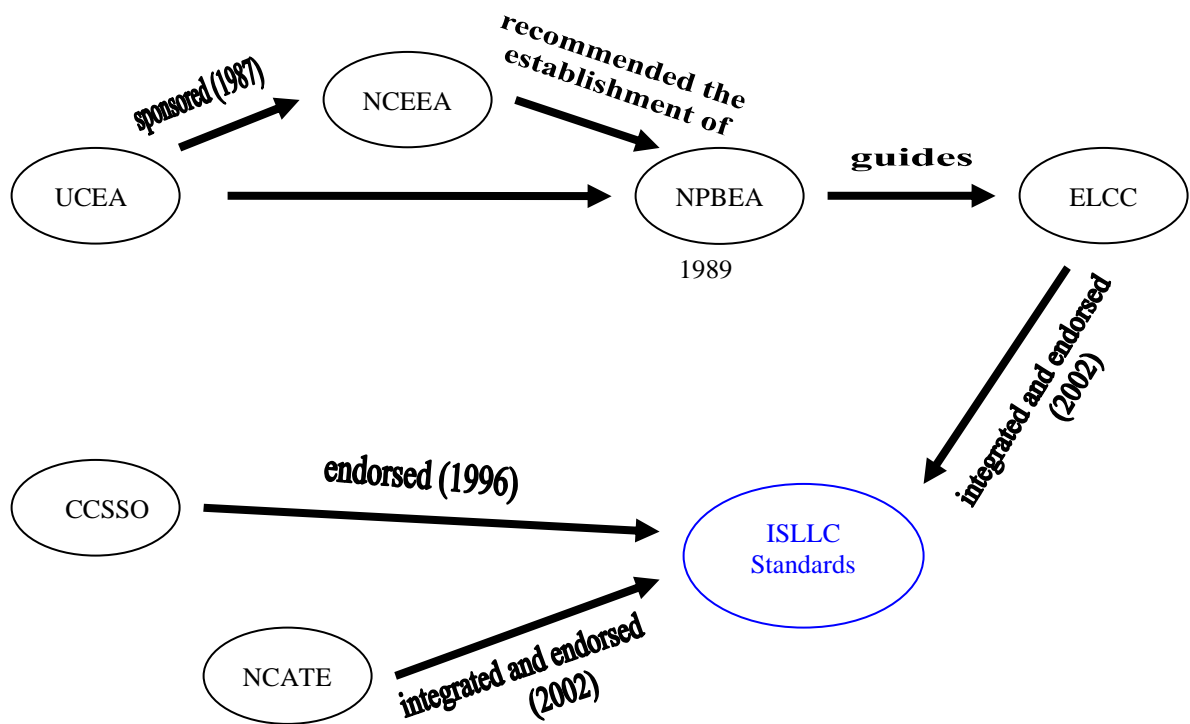
and guided cooperatively by the institution and school district personnel for graduate credit.

(Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996; North Carolina Standards Board for Public School Administration, 2007).



## Appendix B.

### Visual Representation of the Interactions and Interrelationships Between Organizations



## **Appendix C.**

### **North Carolina Standards For School Executives**

#### **Standard 1: Strategic Leadership**

School executives will create conditions that result in strategically re-imagining the school's vision, mission, and goals. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building on its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it.

#### **Standard 2: Instructional Leadership**

School executives will set high standards for the professional practice of instruction and assessment that result in a no nonsense accountable environment. The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the on-going peer review of this work and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.

#### **Standard 3: Cultural Leadership**

School executives will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school's culture contributes to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future. A school executive must be able to "reculture" the school if needed to align with school's goals of improving students and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning and purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school as the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual and collective goals.

#### **Standard 4: Human Resource Leadership**

School executives will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. School executives will ensure that processes and systems are in place that results in the recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development and retention of a high performing staff. The school executive must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching, and must practice fair and consistent evaluation of teachers. The school executive

must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.

**Standard 5: Managerial Leadership**

School executives will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem solving, communicating expectations and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The school executive must be responsible for the monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget decisions so as to meet the needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of every day life is critical for staff to be able to focus its energy on improvement.

**Standard 6: External Development Leadership**

A school executive will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership. Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but in fact build community, the leader proactively creates with staff opportunities for parents, community and business representatives to participate as “stockholders” in the school such that continued investments of resources and good will are not left to chance.

**Standard 7: Micropolitical Leadership**

The school executive will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff’s diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power and influence to realize the school’s vision for success. The executive will also creatively employ an awareness of staff’s professional needs, issues, and interests to build social cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making.

(State Board of Education, 2006)

## **Appendix D.**

### **Philosophical Foundation for the School Executive Standards**

- Today, schools must have proactive school executives who possess a great sense of urgency.
- The goal of school leadership is to transform schools so that large-scale, sustainable, continuous improvement becomes built in to their mode of operation.
- The moral purpose of school leadership is to create schools in which all students can learn, the gap between high and low performance is greatly diminished and what students learn will prepare them for success in their futures, not ours.
- Leadership is not a position or a person. It is a practice that must be embedded in all job roles at all levels of the school district.
- The work of leadership is about working with, for and through people. It is a social act. Whether we are discussing instructional leadership, change leadership or leadership as learning, people are always the medium for the leader.
- Leadership is not about doing everything oneself but it is always about creating processes and systems that will cause everything to happen.
- Leadership is about the executive's ability to select and develop a strong executive staff whose complementary strengths promote excellence in all seven functions of leadership identified in this document.
- The concept of leadership is extremely complex and systemic in nature. Isolating the parts of leadership completely misses the power of the whole. It is not just knowing what to do, but why to do it, how to do it and when to do it.
- Within a school district there are nested leadership systems (local boards of education, central office, school, and classroom). For the organization to be successful these systems must be aligned and supportive, and function as a team.
- Leadership is about setting direction, aligning and motivating people to implement positive sustained improvement.
- Leaders bring their "person" to the practice of leadership. Matching the context of leadership to the "person" of the individual is important to the success of the leader.

(North Carolina State Board of Education, 2006)

## Appendix E.

### Letter of Introduction/Recruitment Letter



#### **Farmer Elementary School**

3557 Grange Hall Road  
Asheboro, NC 27205  
Telephone: (336) 857-3400  
Fax: (336) 857-3409

**Donald E. Andrews**  
Superintendent

---

"Dedicated to Making a Difference"

**Brian Toth**  
Principal

**Lisa Thompson**  
Instructional/Administrative Specialist

Dear School or District Level Administrator,

My name is Brian Toth and I am a doctoral student at UNCG in the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations. I am conducting a dissertation study about the experiences of ELC graduates from UNCG. Carl Lashley and the ELC Department recommended you as a participant for this study.

The UNCG Institutional Review Board has approved this study. The purpose of the research is to seek feedback and ideas from ELC graduates that will be used by the department as they revise their instruction to align under a new set of administrator standards.

You will receive an email in the next several days with a web link to complete a short survey. The entire process will take no more than an hour of your time. I and the ELC Department would greatly value your help with this project. This is an opportunity for you to voice any suggestions and share your feelings about your experience as a student within the ELC Department.

If this email has reached you in error, please "Reply" and indicate you wish to be removed from the distribution list. If this email has reached you successfully, but you would prefer for the next communication to be sent to a different email address, please "Reply" with your preferred email address.

Thank you in advance for helping me and the ELC Department with this study.

Sincerely,

Brian Toth  
Principal of Farmer Elementary School, Randolph County Schools

## Appendix F.

### Statement of Participant Rights/Consent Form

To: [Email]

From: [btooth@randolph.k12.nc.us](mailto:btooth@randolph.k12.nc.us)

---

**Subject:** Please help Dr. Lashley and the UNCG ELC Dept.by completing a survey

**Body:** You are being invited by the ELC Department at UNC Greensboro to participate in a survey. Thanks for your help.

Project Title:

Examining One University-Based Education Leadership Preparation Program, Regarding the Use and Discontinuation of One Set of Benchmark Standards, For the Purpose of Informing Practice.

Student Researcher: Brian Toth

Principal Researcher: Dr. Carl Lashley

Description and Explanation of Purpose and Procedures:

The purpose of this study will be to investigate the effectiveness in using one set of standards (the ISLLC Standards) for equipping graduates with the skills needed to be successful in their roles and responsibilities as school leaders. Participants were selected by the following criteria: graduate of the ELC Department between 1998-2008, currently a practicing school or district-level administrator, and possess an active email account with a Local Education Agency.

As a participant in the study, you are asked to complete the following online survey. Completion of the survey will take twenty to forty minutes.

Potential Risks or Discomforts:

There are no risks to participants associated with this study.

Potential Benefits:

This study will give participants a chance to reflect and evaluate their experience at UNCG. By sharing feedback with the researcher, graduates will impact the future instruction within the ELC Department.

This study will contribute to a knowledge base specifically for the ELC Department at UNCG, but also for leadership preparation programs as a whole. The data collected within this study has the potential to impact decision-making in the way the ELC Department designs and implements instruction according to a new set of benchmark standards (The North Carolina Standards for School Executives).

Consent:

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself can be answered by calling the student researcher, Brian Toth, at (336) 706-0418 or by email at [btoth@randolph.k12.nc.us](mailto:btoth@randolph.k12.nc.us).

Participants are able to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty of any kind.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

Survey responses will be compiled and participant identities will be removed from the data before it is available to the researcher. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the student researcher's office off campus at Farmer Elementary School in Randolph County. The data will be stored for three years from the closure of the project, then shredded and incinerated by the student researcher.

By proceeding forward with the survey, you are affirming that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in the project described to you by this consent form.

Click the link below to proceed with this study.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

Please click the following link if you would prefer not to participate in this study.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

## Appendix G.

### Survey Instrument

#### Dissertation Survey

##### 1. Demographic questions

The following questions are intended to gather demographic information.

###### 1. What is your gender?

- ☐ Male  
☐ Female

###### 2. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ Caucasian  
☐ African-American  
☐ Hispanic  
☐ Asian  
☐ American-Indian

Other (please specify)

###### 3. What graduate level degree(s) have you obtained from UNGC? (Check all that apply)

- ☐ Masters of School Administration (MSA)  
☐ Masters in an area other than School Administration  
☐ Specialist in Education (Ed.S)  
☐ Doctorate of Education (Ed.D)

###### 4. What year(s) did you graduate?

Masters of School Administration (MSA)   
Masters in an area other than School Administration   
Specialist in Education (Ed.S)   
Doctorate of Education (Ed.D)

###### 5. Are you currently a practicing school or district level administrator?

- ☐ Yes  
☐ No

###### 6. What is your job title?

###### 7. What is your school district of employment?



## Dissertation Survey

**8. How long have you worked in the field of Education?**

- ☐ Less than 5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ 10-20 years
- ☐ 20-30 years
- ☐ More than 30 years

**9. Have you ever been or are you now a teacher?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**10. If you answered "Yes" to Question 9, how long were/have you been a teacher?**

**11. Have you ever been or are you now an assistant principal?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**12. If you answered "Yes" to Question 11, how long were/have you been an assistant principal?**

**13. Have you ever been or are you now a principal?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**14. If you answered "Yes" to Question 13, how long were/have you been a principal?**

**15. Have you ever been or are you now a district level administrator?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

**16. If you answered "Yes" to Question 15, how long were/have you been a district level administrator?**

## Dissertation Survey

**17. Have you ever held or do you now hold any other position in a school district?**

☐ Yes

☐ No

If so, please name position(s).

## Dissertation Survey

### 2. General Questions

The following questions are intended to gather general information.

**1. Rate the following reasons as to why you picked UNCG for your graduate education.**

	no significance	little/some significance	significant	very significant
location/convenience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
rigor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
reputation of the program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cost effectiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
other	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please describe "Other"

**2. In your opinion, how respected is the UNCG ELC program in relation to other programs in the area?**

- ☐ Not respected
- ☐ As respected
- ☐ More respected
- ☐ Highly respected

Comments:

**3. In your opinion, how rigorous was the ELC program?**

- ☐ No rigor
- ☐ Rigorous
- ☐ Highly rigorous

Comments:

**4. The amount of balance in the Course of Study between theory and practice (in percents) was:**

% theory/philosophy

% practice/pragmatic information

**5. Was this an appropriate balance?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

## Dissertation Survey

### 6. If you answered "No" to Question 5, what would be a more appropriate balance?

% theory/philosophy

% practice/pragmatic information

### 7. How well did the UNCG ELC program prepare you for school administration?

- ☐ Not well
- ☐ Adequately
- ☐ Very well

comments:

### 8. Please check any practical areas you wish would have been addressed in more depth. (Check all that apply)

- ☐ budget/finance
- ☐ Action Plans
- ☐ personnel observations/evaluations
- ☐ management or operational issues
- ☐ Other (please specify)

## Dissertation Survey

### 3. The ISLLC Standards

The following questions are intended to gather information about the ISLLC Standards. The ISLLC Standards are listed below, for your reference.

The Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards

**Standard 1- Vision**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a school or district vision of learning supported by the school community

**Standard 2- Learning and Teaching**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by promoting a positive school culture, providing an effective instructional program, applying best practice to student learning, and designing comprehensive professional growth plans for staff.

**Standard 3- Operations**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by managing the organization, operations, and resources in a way that promotes a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

**Standard 4- Communities**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by collaborating with families and other community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

**Standard 5- Ethics**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairly, and in an ethical manner.

**Standard 6- The Larger Context**

Graduates are educational leaders who have the knowledge and ability to promote the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

**Standard 7- Internship**

The internship provides significant opportunities for graduates to synthesize and apply the knowledge and practice and develop the skills identified in Standards 1-6 through substantial, sustained, standards-based work in real settings, planned and guided cooperatively by the institution and school district personnel for graduate credit.

**1. How often does your job require activities related to the following standards?**

	Almost never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Standard 1- Vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- The Larger Context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments

## Dissertation Survey

### 2. How important or relevant are the following standards to your success as an administrator?

	No importance	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Very important
Standard 1- Vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- The Larger Context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

### 3. To what degree are the following standards stressed in your school district?

	No importance	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Very important
Standard 1- Vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- The Larger Context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

### 4. How well did the UNCG ELC Department prepare you in each of the following standards?

	No preparation	Poor preparation	Sufficient preparation	Great preparation
Standard 1- Vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- The Larger Context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

## Dissertation Survey

**5. Please rank each of the six standards in terms of how well they were addressed in your preparation program at UNCG.**

	Best	2nd best	3rd best	3rd worst	2nd worst	Worst
Standard 1- Vision	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Learning and Teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Operations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Communities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Ethics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- The Larger Context	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

**6. Refer back to the standard in Question 5 you ranked the best. Describe some things you remember being highlights of your preparation.**

**7. Refer back to the standard in Question 5 you ranked the worst. Describe some specific things which should have been addressed more.**

## Dissertation Survey

### 4. The North Carolina Standards for School Executives

The following questions are intended to gather information about the North Carolina Standards for School Executives. The Standards are listed below, for your reference.

#### The North Carolina Standards for School Executives

##### Standard 1: Strategic Leadership

The school executive will create conditions that result in strategically re-imagining the school's vision, mission, and goals. Understanding that schools ideally prepare students for an unseen but not altogether unpredictable future, the leader creates a climate of inquiry that challenges the school community to continually re-purpose itself by building on its core values and beliefs about its preferred future and then developing a pathway to reach it.

##### Standard 2: Instructional Leadership

The school executive will set high standards for the professional practice of instruction and assessment that result in a no nonsense accountable environment. The school executive must be knowledgeable of best instructional and school practices and must use this knowledge to cause the creation of collaborative structures within the school for the design of highly engaging schoolwork for students, the on-going peer review of this work and the sharing of this work throughout the professional community.

##### Standard 3: Cultural Leadership

The school executive will understand and act on the understanding of the important role a school's culture contributes to the exemplary performance of the school. School executives must support and value the traditions, artifacts, symbols and positive values and norms of the school and community that result in a sense of identity and pride upon which to build a positive future. A school executive must be able to "reculture" the school if needed to align with school's goals of improving students and adult learning and to infuse the work of the adults and students with passion, meaning and purpose. Cultural leadership implies understanding the school as the people in it each day, how they came to their current state, and how to connect with their traditions in order to move them forward to support the school's efforts to achieve individual and collective goals.

##### Standard 4: Human Resource Leadership

The school executive will ensure that the school is a professional learning community. School executives will ensure that processes and systems are in place that results in the recruitment, induction, support, evaluation, development and retention of a high performing staff. The school executive must engage and empower accomplished teachers in a distributive leadership manner, including support of teachers in day-to-day decisions such as discipline, communication with parents, and protecting teachers from duties that interfere with teaching, and must practice fair and consistent evaluation of teachers. The school executive must engage teachers and other professional staff in conversations to plan their career paths and support district succession planning.

##### Standard 5: Managerial Leadership

The school executive will ensure that the school has processes and systems in place for budgeting, staffing, problem solving, communicating expectations and scheduling that result in organizing the work routines in the building. The school executive must be responsible for the monitoring of the school budget and the inclusion of all teachers in the budget decisions so as to meet the needs of every classroom. Effectively and efficiently managing the complexity of every day life is critical for staff to be able to focus its energy on improvement.

##### Standard 6: External Development Leadership

The school executive will design structures and processes that result in community engagement, support, and ownership. Acknowledging that schools no longer reflect but in fact build community, the leader proactively creates with staff opportunities for parents, community and business representatives to participate as "stockholders" in the school such that continued investments of resources and good will are not left to chance.

##### Standard 7: Micropolitical Leadership

The school executive will build systems and relationships that utilize the staff's diversity, encourage constructive ideological conflict in order to leverage staff expertise, power and influence to realize the school's vision for success. The executive will also creatively employ an awareness of staff's professional needs, issues, and interests to build social cohesion and to facilitate distributed governance and shared decision-making.



## Dissertation Survey

### 1. How often does your job require activities related to the following standards?

	Almost never	Yearly	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
Standard 1- Strategic Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Cultural Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Human Resource Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Managerial Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- External Development Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

### 2. How important or relevant are the following standards to your success as an administrator?

	No importance	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Very important
Standard 1- Strategic Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Cultural Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Human Resource Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Managerial Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- External Development Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

### 3. To what degree are the following standards stressed in your school district?

	No importance	Little importance	Some importance	Important	Very important
Standard 1- Strategic Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 2- Instructional Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 3- Cultural Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 4- Human Resource Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 5- Managerial Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 6- External Development Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Standard 7- Micropolitical Leadership	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comments:

## Dissertation Survey

**4. Does one set of standards more accurately address the responsibilities of your job?**

- ☐ ISLLC Standards
- ☐ NC Standards for School Executives
- ☐ Parts of both

Comments

**5. As the ELC Department revises its Course of Study, which set of standards should they use as the primary influence?**

- ☐ ISLLC Standards
- ☐ NC Standards for School Executives
- ☐ Parts of both

Comments:

**6. What feedback or suggestions do you have for the UNCG ELC Department about your experience as a student?**

## Appendix H.

### Reminder to Prospective Participants

**To:** [Email]

**From:** [btooth@randolph.k12.nc.us](mailto:btooth@randolph.k12.nc.us)

---

**Subject:** A friendly reminder to help Dr. Lashley and the ELC Department at UNCG.

**Body:** Dear UNCG ELC Graduate,

This email is being sent out to remind those who have not had the opportunity to complete the survey yet for the ELC Department.

This is a great opportunity for you to share feedback with the ELC Department about your experience as a student.

A link has been created below for you to access the survey.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx>

We greatly appreciate your help with this project.

Please click the following link if you would prefer not to participate.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/optout.aspx>

## **Appendix I.**

### **Interview Consent Form**

Project Title: Examining One University-Based Education Leadership Preparation Program, Regarding the Use and Discontinuation of One Set of Benchmark Standards, For the Purpose of Informing Practice.

Student Researcher: Brian Toth

Principal Investigator: Dr. Carl Lashley

To select alumni of the Department of Education Leadership and Cultural Foundations at UNCG between the years of 1998-2008.

You have been selected to participate in an interview. Brian Toth, a doctoral student at UNCG, is conducting a study in cooperation with the ELC Department. You have been recommended to participate as an interview candidate by the ELC Department.

#### **Description and Explanation of Purpose and Procedures:**

The purpose of this study will be to investigate the effectiveness in using one set of standards (the ISLLC Standards) for equipping graduates with the skills needed to be successful in their roles and responsibilities as school leaders. Participants were selected by the following criteria: graduate of the ELC Department between 1998-2008, currently a practicing school or district-level administrator in North Carolina, and possess an active email account with a Local Education Agency.

As a participant in the study, you are asked to participate in an interview. The interview should take 30 to 90 minutes. Interview responses may be used to craft survey questions for a second phase of this study.

#### **Potential Risks or Discomforts:**

There are no risks to participants associated with this study.

#### **Potential Benefits:**

This study will give participants a chance to reflect and evaluate their experience at UNCG. By sharing feedback with the researcher, graduates will impact the future instruction within the ELC Department.

This study will contribute to a knowledge base specifically for the ELC Department at UNCG, but also for leadership preparation programs as a whole. The data collected within this study has the potential to impact decision-making in the way the ELC Department designs and implements instruction according to a new set of benchmark standards (The North Carolina Standards for School Executives).

Consent:

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research involving people follows federal regulations, has approved the research and this consent form. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this project can be answered by calling Mr. Eric Allen at (336) 256-1482. Questions regarding the research itself can be answered by calling the student researcher, Brian Toth, at (336) 706-0418 or by email at [btoth@randolph.k12.nc.us](mailto:btoth@randolph.k12.nc.us). Participants are able to withdraw from the study at any time, without penalty of any kind.

A letter of support from the Education Leadership & Cultural Foundations Department has been included with this consent form.

Confidentiality will be maintained at all times. Interview responses will be compiled and participant identities will be removed when the raw data is transcribed. All data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the student researcher's office off campus at Farmer Elementary School in Randolph County. The data will be stored for three years from the closure of the project, then shredded and incinerated by the student researcher.

By signing this form, you are agreeing to participate in the project described to you by Brian Toth.

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Participant's Signature

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Date